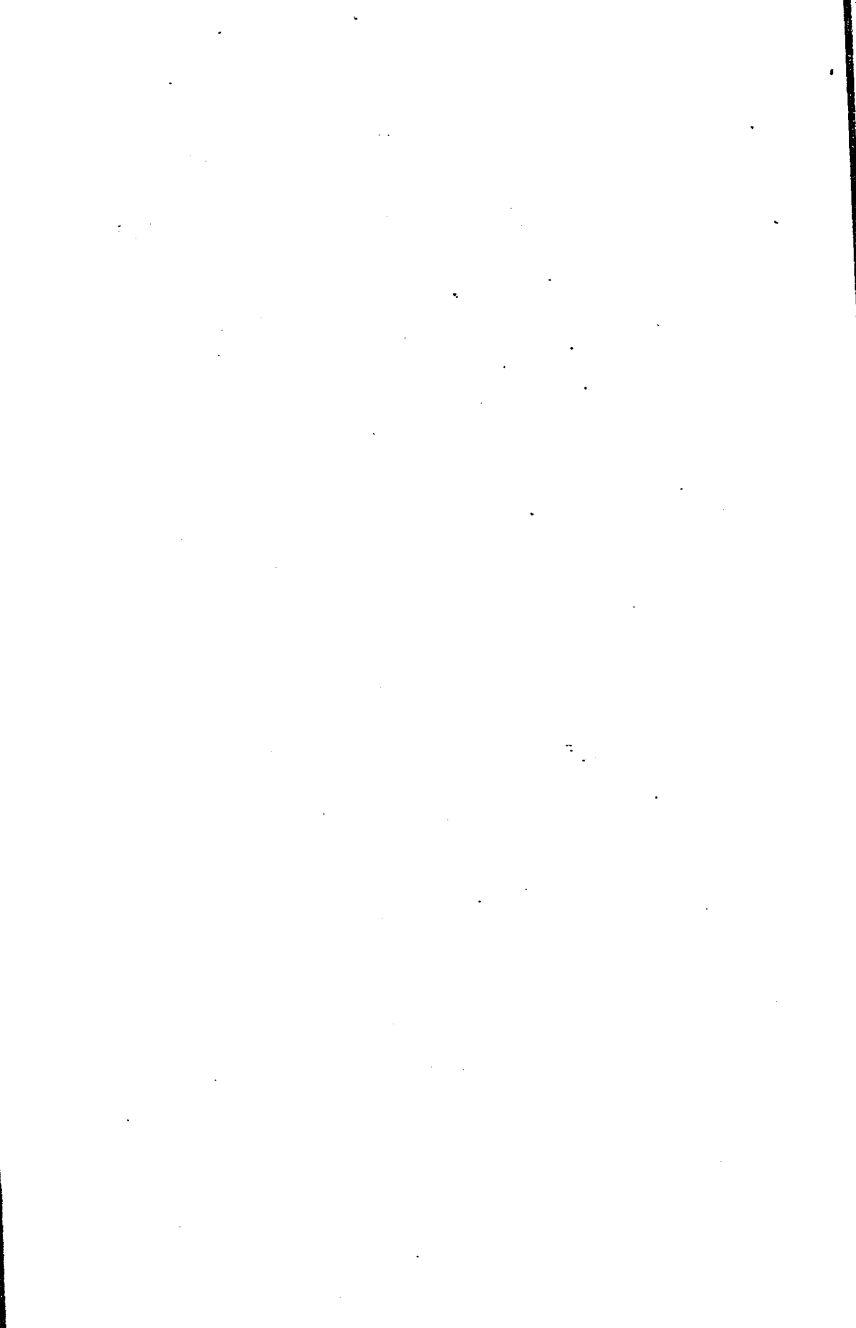


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CHILDREN'S WORK IN THE CHURCH

**By
MARY E. SKINNER**

ANOTHER ABINGDON-COKESBURY GOOD BOOK

CHILDREN'S WORK IN THE CHURCH

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*For the Church Without Separate
Departments*

By
MARY E. SKINNER

C. A. BOWEN, D.D., GENERAL EDITOR

ABINGDON-COKESBURY PRESS
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DEDICATED TO

F. S. W., L. V. B., G. B., AND A. H. S.

*Who grew up with the writer in the open country
and from whom has been drawn more strength
and courage than they know*

163412

PREFACE

THE value of church work with children is not measured in terms of attendance, hours, programs, size of building, or community. This book has been written with the rural and small-town church particularly in mind, with the hope that it will help persons privileged to work with children in those situations find there an opportunity for Christian service that calls forth their best effort, and that results in ever-increasing joy in their own lives as they seek to help develop in children a vital Christian experience.

Churches providing departmental organization will need special pamphlets and other books treating more in detail the plan of work for separate departments. Only general treatment of those situations has been possible in this text.

The questions at the beginning of each chapter are intended to stimulate the thinking of the reader or of the class and to direct each person to a consideration of his own situation. For this reason the problems raised are not always considered in the chapter which follows. The questions at the end of each chapter are for special study, written assignments, reports, and class discussion. Here, too, the reader is directed to a study of his own situation, to which it is hoped the content of the chapter will have brought some help.

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A large number of persons have co-operated in making this book possible. Experimental work under the leadership of Mrs. Clay E. Smith, in which Freddie Henry, Corinne Little, Georgia Keene, Mrs. H. M. Wade, and others participated, was the basis for determining the content. To these, to associates in the Children's Division, and others in the Editorial and Local Church Departments of the General Board of Christian Education who made helpful suggestions in the reading of the manuscript, and to Ruby Holt Sandefur for painstaking efficiency in preparing the manuscript, the writer is deeply grateful.

M. E. S.

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CHAPTER I

THE CHILDREN WE TEACH

"And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." (Mark 10:16.)

THE children that the teacher sees on Sunday are the same children that have been living, playing, and studying at school and in the homes during the week. They possess the same abilities and interests at the church that they possess elsewhere. Churches are, therefore, trying harder than ever before to plan for them in such a way that their normal abilities and interests may be guided and directed. A study of children's work in the church must, therefore, begin with a study of the children themselves, in order that we may know how to provide for them and guide them.

CHARACTERISTICS COMMON TO MOST CHILDREN

1. *Children are seldom still.* Their ceaseless bodily activity seems to be the natural way for them to exercise and grow. The baby waves, kicks, twists and bounces, then crawls, toddles, and walks. The small child reaches, pushes and pulls, then climbs and jumps. Boys and girls hop, skip, run, swing, tumble, balance, and try various feats of strength and skill.

If children are in positions where some kind of bodily movement is impossible, their limbs ache, they grow restless and miserable, and their whole being cries out for freedom. This does not mean that unrestrained activity can be permitted at all times, but it does mean that they need opportunity for free bodily movement and guidance in learning to use these powers in helpful ways. A little child who moves frequently is not necessarily a nervous child or a bad child. Sunday school teachers should work with, and not against, this natural quality of little children.

2. *Children like to find out about things around them.* Hands, mouth, nose, eyes, and ears, all assist them in doing this. Who has not seen a small child rub, shake, tear, taste, and smell some object? Or who has not seen a child listening to a watch ticking; opening and shutting boxes, doors, and drawers; tearing up flowers; taking to pieces a toy; exploring the yard, the hills, the fields, and creek banks in the neighborhood; or using a book to find out more about some place or person in whom he is interested?

They also find out about things by asking questions. Not all of their questions can be answered, to be sure, but those which reveal their interest in things around them can be answered truthfully, even though full information cannot always be given.

3. *Children like to do what other people do.* A small

child will cross his feet like daddy; will play sweeping, dusting, and milking, if these things go on around him; will pretend to read; will ask for toys such as other children have, and will desire privileges which other children enjoy.

4. *Children like to have the attention and approval of other people.* A baby will sometimes cry because he has learned that crying brings attention. A small child rejoices when mother notices that his playthings are all put away. Older boys and girls, as well as little children, like to be the center of attention. Because of this quality in children, a wise amount of friendly approval seems much more helpful than blame and punishment.

5. *Children like to do things, make things, and to make things happen.* Blowing bubbles; making tracks in the wet sand or mud; saying "Boo" to make you jump; piling up sand, boxes, or blocks; dragging around chairs, dolls, toys; cutting, hammering, sewing, painting are all evidences of this creative desire. It is always possible to provide without cost material and objects of this kind for children in the home. It is frequently possible for the Sunday school teacher to guide children in making and doing things which add pleasure and happiness to others.

6. *Children like to have their own things and to collect objects of interest.* The word "mine" will be among the first words that a little child learns to say. A box in which

his own things can be kept will help to develop a feeling of responsibility and care for his things, but selfishness can be avoided only if he has opportunity to share his playthings with other children and to give away something of his own to make another child happy.

The rocks, leaves, pictures, marbles, and various odds and ends gathered by boys and girls reveal their desire to own and collect. With proper guidance this interest can be directed to collecting worth-while objects which can be used to some good purpose.

7. Children seem to be naturally trusting, sympathetic, and friendly. A tender feeling for a pet or for any person or animal in need is one of the starting points for developing a spirit of friendliness and helpfulness toward all. The church can help in developing this quality.

8. Children are different from each other. Age makes a most noticeable difference. Two-year-old Jane toddles about, enjoys a game of peek-a-boo, or plays quietly for a long time while her mother sews near at hand; six-year-old Joe will jump from one step to another instead of walking down, and is constantly asking, "What can I do now?"; ten-year-old Frances gets herself ready for school, reads stories to Joe, puts Jane to bed, and enjoys games with rules and scores.

Children of the same age are also different. Some develop more slowly than others; an only child in a family

is apt to continue his baby ways longer than another child from a family of several children; a child who has been sick a great deal is not apt to have the same joyous, happy outlook upon life as another child of the same age who has always been well and strong.

The way in which people live together in the home also makes a difference. A home founded upon the unselfish love of father and mother, who wanted children and who try to surround them with intelligent affection and understanding rather than mere luxuries and ease, helps children to have a wholesome outlook upon life. The family attitude toward other people in the community, toward law observance, toward the church and all that the church stands for, provides an atmosphere which becomes an unconscious part of their children's training in Christian living.

9. Children possess a spiritual nature which enables them to trust, love, and worship the Heavenly Father. It is in this respect that we are made in the image of God. The fact that they love approval makes it possible for them to seek the approval of an unseen Heavenly Father and to find pleasure in serving him. As they learn that all people are God's children, that God wants all his children to love and help each other, they come to understand that the best way to please God is to be a helpful member of God's family.

"FOR EVERY CHILD"

Christian character cannot be developed apart from day-by-day living. The concern of the church, therefore, extends to every experience which in any way affects the life of a child.

1. *The church desires that every child shall have the best possible opportunity for good health, proper food, suitable clothing, and normal bodily development.* Attention to teeth, tonsils, and adenoids; plenty of sleep, fresh air, and water inside and out; an annual physical examination—all have a religious meaning when we remember that our bodies are the temples of the spirit that is within us. The church, therefore, co-operates with all agencies engaged in making these provisions possible for every child.

2. *The church desires that every child shall be understood and treated as a real person capable of worthy membership in home, community, church, and in the family of God, even while he is a child.* To this end every effort is made by Christian people to spread abroad in the land a better understanding of child life and a desire to work with, not against, the laws of life and character growth.

3. *The church desires that every child shall have the privilege of the best that any of us know about Christian ways of living.* For instance, we would protect them from the idea that God loves white people better than other people in the world; that people must fight to get on in the

world ; that the strong, the many, or the rich have special privileges over the weak, the few, or the poor ; that running a train is more honorable business than shoveling the coal that fires it ; that selling goods over the counter is more honorable than producing those goods ; or that lending money is more honorable than paying it back. We want our children to go beyond us in Christlike living, and for their sakes, as well as for our own, we constantly try in our own living to practice those things which we believe are Christlike.

4. *The church desires that every child shall know, love, and trust God, shall feel at home in his world, and shall find joy in Christian life and service.* We wish for him, first, a Christian home where things happen in a regular, orderly way ; where religion is an everyday experience of those about him ; where worship is not limited to the times when grace is said at the table or when the evening prayer is said by the bedside ; where the beauty of the world, the hills, the trees, the sunset, growing things, living things, friends, all speak of the Creator of the universe and bring a message of the love and the abiding presence of God ; where all persons are respected, and where greatest joy is found in unselfish, co-operative living. Furthermore, we desire that every child shall have "spiritual and moral training to help him to stand firm under the pressure of

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life" and that his own Christian experience shall be vital and real.

THE CHURCH'S PART

It is evident, therefore, that the church's interest in children extends far beyond what actually happens at the church building itself. The nature of this study, however, brings us back at this point to a consideration of those provisions which can be made in the program and plan of the local church to meet the needs of children. Some such provision as the following is possible in every church:

1. *A definite space in which the children can feel at home, and equipment which will insure their bodily comfort.*

2. *A plan which provides time for worship, for study, for planning together things they will do for others, and for having a part in those plans of the church which they are able to understand.*

3. *Leaders who will seek to understand the nature and needs of children; who will try to use to the best advantage whatever they have of time, space, and equipment; who will assume responsibility for improving the conditions for children; and who will supply sympathy, love, and guidance in Christian living.*

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Read Mark 10: 13-16. What do you think the disciples were learning that day about Jesus' attitude toward children?

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2. With how many different children do you have contact during a week? At what places or occasions do you see and talk with them? What are you doing to become a more helpful friend to children? What children would name you among their best friends?

3. Two children approximately three and five years of age were playing in the back yard. Several wooden boxes, a number of bottles, tin tops of various sizes, an old spoon, and a box of spools were close at hand. The tin tops were being filled with wet sand, and sand cakes were placed around the edge of a wooden box turned over for a table. A spool served as a glass for make-believe water and for a mixing spoon to stir the cake. The older child pulled a flower and placed it in the hole of the spool in the center of the table. The younger child also went for a flower, but began pulling it to pieces and seemed to forget all about it when he came back to the table. Not much conversation was going on, but the words, "Look, mamma," brought a smiling adult to the kitchen window for a nod or "I see you" at frequent intervals.

Which of the "Characteristics Common to Most Children," discussed in this chapter, do you find in the above illustration? How could teachers or parents provide for or guide the interests which are revealed?

4. A group of children approximately six to eight years of age were playing under a shade tree. Small pieces of broken china, moss, leaves, and spools were being arranged among the roots of the tree to furnish the house in which "flower ladies" were living. Several children were gathering handfuls of acorns. They seemed to have no particular purpose other than to see who could gather the most, and made frequent comparisons as they met each other on their rounds. Two older children were swinging from low limbs, frequently calling out to the others: "Watch me. I bet you can't do this." The children came together when a well-known friend approached. Each was ready to show or tell about his treasures as well as to hear the friend tell about his own similar experiences of other days.

Do the children you teach reveal any of the characteristics of

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the children in this illustration? How could you provide for or guide a similar experience for the children you teach?

5. A group of fourth- and fifth-grade children were in their room at school. A map on which there were small pictures showing how people in other parts of the world live hung in the front of the room. One child had cut out a picture of a man wearing a turban, scanty clothing, and pushing a wheelbarrow, and asked the teacher where it should be placed on the map. Other children drew near to look at the picture, and all were ready to express an idea as to where it should go. The teacher reminded them that they wanted to be sure to put it in the right place, and suggested that they go back to the magazine from which it had been cut to see if any help could be found there. The phrase, "A Burmese Trader," was found, and the teacher suggested that the dictionary might help. This resulted in the location of the country and the placing of the picture. The principal of the school came in, and several children told him about the picture and how they had decided where it belonged.

How can the Sunday school use some of the interests and abilities which these children revealed?

6. In what ways do you think your Sunday school is helping boys and girls?

7. What can persons who really want to help children do to become better teachers? In what ways can they help each other to become better teachers?

8. What particular help do you hope to receive from a study of this book?

CHAPTER II

GROUPING CHILDREN FOR CLASS WORK

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

1. How many children under twelve years of age attend your Sunday school? How many others should attend?

2. Into what classes (or departments) are these children grouped? By what names are these groups designated?

3. Can you give the age, school grade, and parents' name and address for each member of your class? Do you have this information in writing? Where is your class record book kept?

4. If you are a parent, can you give the name of your child's public school teacher, the grade he is in, and the name of some book he uses at school? Do you know his classmates? Can you give this information about his Sunday school?

IN order to make its largest contribution to the Christian development of its members, to enlist the interest and loyalty of capable leaders, to win the confidence and respect of parents and of the community, every school needs a definite plan of organization. A school of less than fifty members will probably not have the same organization as a school of one hundred and fifty members, but each can have a definite plan. A good organization involves, first of all, a proper grouping of the members for work.

BASIS FOR GROUPING CHILDREN

Although children of approximately the same age are different, it is reasonable to expect that they will have

enough in common to make it possible for them to enjoy the same plan of work. One eight-year-old child has much to share with another; a seven-year-old who has just started to school has much to share with a six-year-old just ready to start; and a child who entered school late and at eight years of age is still in the first grade has much in common with other eight-year-old children, although he may not be able to read as well as they do. Nearness of age seems, therefore, a good basis for grouping children into classes.

RECOMMENDED GROUPING

It is very desirable to designate groups of children by the name which describes their position in the school rather than by the teacher's name. The commonly accepted terms by which groups of children are designated are nursery, beginner, primary, and junior.

1. *Nursery group, children under four years of age.* The word *department* is often used to designate this phase of work, which will be more fully described in Chapter IV. All children under four should be enrolled as members of this department, but not many will be brought to Sunday school. These children are still babies or are just removed from babyhood, and are full of activity. They have little power of attention and should not be expected to take part in group activity and plans. No literature is provided for

them; therefore they do not constitute a "class" in the sense that this term is applied to older children. If a separate place is provided at the church for them, they should be made comfortable and happy. For their own sakes, as well as for the sake of older children, they should remain with their mothers or fathers if a separate place is not provided.

2. *Beginner group, ages four and five.* Children of these ages are more developed in many respects than those of the nursery age. They can talk together with the teacher about things they do and see at home; they can gather around a picture and enjoy it; they can enjoy a short story if it is told in childlike language; they can sometimes join the teacher in singing softly a simple song not more than six lines in length, but need not be urged to sing; they will probably learn some of the verses which the teacher uses many times in talking with them, but repeating verses should not be emphasized. These little children constitute the *beginner class* (or department).

3. *Primary group, ages six to eight.* Children of these ages have much in common. Most of them have started to school; they have more powers for group work and more control of their actions; they enjoy stories and songs which they understand, but should not be expected to do much memorizing; they are interested in people and things, are asking more thoughtful questions, and can take

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part in a variety of plans. Since they are not expected to prepare a lesson for Sunday school as juniors do, the lesson folder given them after the class session each Sunday is that upon which the plan for that day has been based. They will enjoy telling other members of the family about the story and picture. They should be encouraged to keep these papers, but they need not bring them back to Sunday school.

4. *Junior group, ages nine to eleven or twelve.* Children of these ages have grown in independence and do not like to be classed with smaller children; they can read and can make very definite preparation for each Sunday's work; they are interested in doing things that count, but have no interest in plans which seem to them too childish; they are capable of developing a very fine type of group loyalty; they despise sham and insincerity, and are quick to detect the inaccuracies or inconsistencies of adults.

ADAPTATIONS SOMETIMES NEEDED

1. *Sometimes the number of children of a given age group as designated above is small and combinations are necessary.* Before deciding, however, that this is wise, the leaders should find out if there are other children in the community who, if brought into the Sunday school, might justify at least one class for each age group. A fine young woman once agreed to take a class of three juniors,

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ages nine and ten. Within three months the number had increased to ten, and fine classwork was going on.

There will be places, however, where even when this is done combinations are sometimes necessary. It never seems wise to combine children of the nursery age with any group that attempts class work. A good beginner teacher said that all her work had been spoiled on a certain day by a child of two who was brought to her class. Just as she began a story he lay down on the floor and rolled about. It was natural that all the children would be more interested in him than any story or plan, and so she felt that little was accomplished that day. The presence of even one young child is apt to demand so much of the teacher's attention that the rest of the group receives no help. It is for this reason that parents should be helped to understand that a little child not only receives no help, but that he makes good work impossible for the older ones.

The increased independence and variety of interests of juniors make it seem best to separate them from younger children. The combination, therefore, which seems to present fewer problems is that of beginners and primaries. The teacher of this combined group can often make separate plans for the older and younger members of the group even when they are in one class.

Limited space and few good teachers sometimes seem to necessitate combinations, but those who want children to

have the best possible help will not stop until space and leaders are secured.

2. *Sometimes the number of children within an age-group justifies separation into more than one class.* It is a mistake, however, to plan for too many small classes. Ten or twelve are not too many primary or junior children for one class—provided, of course, that a good teacher is available. Some would say that fifteen are not too many.

The years included in the primary and junior ages parallel in a general way those included in the first six grades of public schools. The separation into three primary and three junior classes would, therefore, result in six grades in the Sunday school.

The number of children will sometimes seem to justify grouping as follows: First and second grades (approximately six and seven years of age), third and fourth grades (approximately eight and nine years of age), and fifth and sixth grades (approximately ten and eleven years of age). Again, two primary and two junior classes may be needed. In that case the number of children of each age (or grade) will need to be determined, and the combination which will result in the best working group should be made.

These suggestions for grouping cannot be considered apart from the available space. A class of ten or twelve

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children may be desirable; but if this number is assigned to a tiny room meant for six or eight, good work is impossible. One large room should be used for several classes of the younger children with provision for worship as a department rather than for a single large class with too wide an age range.

It is evident, therefore, that the number of children of each age, their school grade and general development, number and type of teachers available, and space, will each need to be considered when organizing children's groups, and that the range of ages and school grades within one class should not be greater than is absolutely necessary.

HOME MEMBERS

There are children in many communities who, because of state of health, physical handicap, distance, or indifference of parents, cannot attend Sunday school. Some of the advantages of the Sunday school can be extended to them if they are enrolled as *home members* of the class of children of their own age. The teacher will be sure to be very friendly with each home member, and the class may be able to plan various ways of making the home member feel that he is a real member of the Sunday school.

The home member should receive regularly the book or lesson paper used by the class. Perhaps a card or note will be sent on his birthday. The age and situation of

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each home member will help to determine the best way to show friendliness, but the friendliness need not all be on the side of the class. Perhaps the home members will cut out pictures which the class needs for a certain purpose, or raise a pot of flowers which can be sent to the church, or write some notes for the class when needed.

Every good teacher will have in mind the development of each home member and will on her own account do many things in which the class perhaps cannot participate.

Babies enrolled in the nursery department will also be considered as *home members*, but the visits and messages will usually be to the parents instead of to the babies themselves.

This plan of home members should apply throughout the school, and can be the means of adding happiness as well as extending the Kingdom of God if carried on in the right way. The reader is urged not to dismiss quickly this idea as one of those "we can't do" without first going over in his own mind or with other teachers the entire list of families in the church and others not identified with another church to discover if there are children to whom this fellowship can be extended.

KEEPING THE SCHOOL PROPERLY GROUPED

1. *In order to keep a school properly grouped, the leaders must desire to maintain a good organization.*

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Until the leaders discover the best plan of grouping for their school and earnestly strive to maintain a good organization, irregularities, such as self-promotion and combination of classes when attendance is low, will occur. Every school can develop a legitimate pride in its good organization. Personal conferences with parents who do not realize that the church has a real school will help. One good woman insisted that five-year-old Frank should go into the class with nine-year-old Robert; another wanted all her children to go into Miss Smith's class "because she is such a good friend of mine." All such problems are the result of long years of poor organization, and can be solved only by patient and continuous effort on the part of those who would without offense help children and parents to develop a pride in "our school." When once parents realize that it is a school, that definite plans and materials are provided for each child, and that the child who goes in the wrong class misses something planned especially for him, they will usually co-operate.

2. *Annual promotion is necessary if the proper grouping is to be maintained.* Promotion should occur the last Sunday in September, in order that on the first Sunday in October, which is New Year in the Sunday school, each teacher and class, with the new lesson material for that quarter, may go forward without loss of

time. Annual promotion is not only necessary from the standpoint of keeping the school properly graded, but it has the following advantages:

a. Helps children and parents understand that the church has a real school.

b. Gives the child a sense of achievement and also a happy anticipation.

c. Makes it possible for teachers to become increasingly good teachers of a specific age-group.

d. Gives children a chance to form contacts year after year with all the good teachers in a Sunday school, whose friendship he in no sense loses when he goes on to another class.

e. Makes possible definite planning to meet specific needs of boys and girls of various age-groups.

3. *Promotions will be easy if the school is properly grouped.* Beginners who have reached the age of six, or who will be six before January, or who will start to school should go into the primary class unless for some reason, such as state of health or slow development, their needs can best be met by remaining another year with the beginners; primary children who have reached the age of nine or who will be nine by January should go into the junior class; juniors who are twelve or who will be twelve before January should go into the intermediate class. In some schools there is no inter-

GROUPING CHILDREN FOR CLASS WORK

mediate class, but all between the ages of thirteen and eighteen are in one class. In that case the twelve-year-olds will probably have a better opportunity for carrying on activities on a level with their ability if they remain in the junior class until they are approximately thirteen.

If there should be three primary and three junior classes, each class would advance a grade as in public school, and the six-year-olds from the beginner group would constitute the new first-year primary class.

If there are two primary and two junior classes, promotions will need to be carefully considered. If the six- and seven-year-olds have been together, those who have reached the age of eight, or who will be eight before January, will be promoted to the second primary class, and the beginner children who have reached the age of six, together with the primary children who are approximately seven, will constitute the new primary group.

In order to avoid the difficulty of promoting only the older children of a class and receiving into the class those from a younger group, it is sometimes possible so to organize the school that a group of children approximately six, seven, and eight years of age may be called the second-year primary class (or second grade) ; the next year, when the group will be seven, eight, and nine, they may become

the third-year primary class (or third grade); and the next year, when they are eight, nine, and ten, they will become the first-year junior class (or fourth grade).

Children may enter the beginner class at the age of four; hence nursery children are not here mentioned in connection with promotion day.

One caution immediately comes to mind. Children should understand that they do not go up to another class immediately on reaching another birthday. The age on October 1 is that which determines the grouping, and no change should be made until October 1 comes round again, unless, of course, some mistake needs to be corrected. But promotion on birthdays causes endless confusion. A feeling of appreciation on the part of children for the school which once a year has a definite time for all to be promoted is therefore essential.

All details in connection with annual promotion need to be thought through by the teachers well in advance of promotion day. There should be no last-minute decisions. Parents and children should understand all plans, or there is sure to be disappointment and sometimes hard feeling not easy to overcome.

Teachers should refrain from building up such loyalty to themselves that proper promotion is impossible. One who works with four- or five-year-old children for several years, reading about and observing children of this

age, improving her methods of work year after year, collecting songs, good pictures, and other material suitable for little children, becomes increasingly able to help other children of this age, and need feel no regret when one group passes into the hands of another who in turn has made the same kind of growth through experience in teaching primary children. Every child in the Sunday school needs the opportunity of fellowship with every good Christian teacher, and each should rejoice in the privilege of fellowship with the children as they pass through the school.

4. *Right classification of new pupils helps to keep the school properly grouped.* A new pupil should be classified only after all information as to his age, school grade, and, if possible, his classification in the Sunday school from which he comes is secured. It is a good plan to ask a new pupil to visit the class in which he seems to belong on the first day of his attendance. This will mean that friends will sometimes be separated. However, the happiness of the new pupil when he comes to feel at home with others about his own age who are doing interesting things more than makes up for the bit of disappointment when he finds that his friend and playmate is in another class. The teacher in whose class he visits is responsible for securing the necessary information from his parents, or from some

older person who can give it, and for placing him the next Sunday in the right class. Again a caution is needed.

Classes and teachers sometimes become so keen for new members that they *claim* those who visit their class, but who in reality belong in another class. The solution is found in developing on the part of all a sense of pride and pleasure in having a new member in our Sunday school, "even if he is not in our class."

RECORDS ¹

A good teacher keeps an accurate roll of her class membership. This roll can be kept in a record book supplied by the school or in a simple notebook neatly ruled to mark attendance for each Sunday in the year and with a space at the bottom of the page to enter the total attendance each Sunday and, if it is desired, the amount of the class offering for that Sunday. This record should begin with the first Sunday in October, and she should be able to estimate quickly any needed statistical item about her class, such as number on roll at the beginning of the year, number dropped for good reasons, new pupils added during the year, number to be promoted, and the like.

At some other place in her record book a page or sec-

¹ If space and number of children make a departmental organization possible, records and reports will be made by the department secretary for the *department* as a unit, and not for each class separately.

GROUPING CHILDREN FOR CLASS WORK

tion of a page should be used for the following information about each pupil: Parents' name and address, the day, month, and year of the child's birth, and his school grade. If every teacher has this in writing, it will be easy to remember birthdays with a card, note, or visit; to determine who should be promoted; and for the new or substitute teacher to know something about each member of the class without having to ask him.

A group of juniors had changed teachers five times within a year. To each of the five teachers they gave the information about their school grade and birthday. "We have a new teacher next Sunday, and I bet I know one question she'll ask," said Jim. "I wish I had a nickel for every time I have told a Sunday school teacher how old I am," replied Joe. This seems to be a little thing, but a boy whose progress in school has been slow is not made much happier when repeatedly called upon to tell his age. A record is one thing which will help pupils think of Sunday school as a real school, for this information is a part of the permanent record about every pupil in the public school and is usually secured only once.

The marking of the record on Sunday morning should be reduced to the minimum as far as time is concerned. The offering should probably be taken at the beginning of the class session and sent to the secretary, in order that he may not have to interrupt the class by calling for it. It is

easy to report quickly the number of pupils present, and the matter of actually marking her book can be left until Sunday school is over, for any teacher will surely remember who was present. The follow-up of any absentee should occur immediately by telephone, if possible; if not, by note, message, or visit.

It has been observed that contests and banners sometimes arouse undesirable competition and un-Christian rejoicing over another's failure; that honor rolls and gold stars appeal to undesirable motives. Good teachers are, therefore, rapidly abandoning these "crutches" and are working toward the more Christian reward that comes from the satisfaction of having a part in doing something interesting and worth while. The follow-up of absentees and continuous effort on the part of the teacher to draw all members into active interest in the work and plans of the class are, therefore, better ways of keeping up attendance than the stars, banners, and various devices formerly so popular.

REPORTS ²

The weekly report to the secretary should contain such items as "number present" and "amount of class (or de-

* If space and number of children make a departmental organization possible, records and reports will be made by the department secretary for the *department* as a unit, and not for each class separately.

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partment) offering." "New members today" and "visitors" may also be included, but it adds to the friendliness of the school if each teacher introduces visitors and new members to the whole school.

Some schools have adopted the plan of reading on one Sunday the report of the previous Sunday. The haste often attending the records and reports is then removed, and each teacher can hand to the secretary the offering and report at the end of the session. The secretary then posts his books and has his report all ready for the next Sunday.

It is when all teachers of the school come together in a council meeting that such items as these pertaining to the management of the school as a whole can be discussed and the best plan decided upon. Each teacher should feel responsibility for all such matters as well as for the progress of her own particular class. The school secretary will be able quickly to report all statistical items pertaining to the enrolment, new members, average attendance for the month or quarter, bills paid, and the like, but each teacher should be ready to share the plans and progress as well as the problems of her class. It is at this time that forward-looking plans to lift the level of the whole school will be worked out, and every good teacher will attend and participate.

CHILDREN'S WORK IN THE CHURCH

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. In what ways have the following been considered in determining the grouping of children for class work in your school?

a. Number of children of each age group: beginner, primary, and junior.

b. School grades.

c. General state of health and development of individual children.

d. Space available for class work.

e. Number of teachers available.

2. What changes, if any, would seem to make possible better group work? What steps can you take *now* looking to a change sometime in the future?

3. Suppose the superintendent and other leaders of your Sunday school see no reason for promoting pupils. List the points you would use in trying to convince them that it is a good plan and that your school can do it.

4. Time yourself next Sunday and see how quickly you can make the report for the secretary. Keep trying until you reduce this item to a minimum.

5. Observe next Sunday how many children arrive after the hour set for opening. Who is responsible for their being late? If officers, teachers, and pastor agree that beginning Sunday school at the appointed time will help parents and children understand that the church has a real school, list the things they could do to bring about this practice.

6. Why are stars, banners, and various attendance devices not used by the best Sunday school workers? Upon what better basis do they try to secure regular attendance and interest in the work?

7. What do you consider to be good reasons for dropping a name from the Sunday school roll?

8. What grouping would you suggest for the school with pupils of the following ages and school grades?

Three pupils four years old.

Four pupils five years old.

One pupil six years old who has not started to school.

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One pupil six years old, first grade.

Two pupils seven years old, first grade.

One pupil eight years old, first grade.

Two pupils eight years old, second grade.

One pupil eight years old, third grade.

Two pupils nine years old, third grade.

One pupil ten years old, third grade.

Two pupils ten years old, fourth grade.

Two pupils eleven years old, fourth grade.

Two pupils ten years old, fifth grade.

One pupil twelve years old, fifth grade.

One pupil twelve years old, third grade.

9. What further information would you seek about certain of these children? Indicate those who would probably be promoted at the end of the year.

CHAPTER III

PROVIDING SPACE AND EQUIPMENT

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

1. What would a stranger passing through your community think if he compared the general appearance of your church building and grounds with that of the public school and the best homes of your community?

2. If he were to visit your church between Sundays, what evidence would he see that children are expected to be comfortable and happy and to worship there?

3. List the pictures and all other objects on the walls of the space used for children at your church. How long have these objects been there? Do you think the children know their meaning or enjoy them?

4. What is the most beautiful thing little children can see in your church?

THE general appearance of the church building and grounds usually indicates the members' attitude toward the church and the things for which it stands. If it is unpainted, in poor condition, full of cobwebs and dust, has broken windowpanes, soiled songbooks, and a rusty stove with a smoking pipe, it silently proclaims the negligence and lack of appreciation on the part of its membership. Such a building becomes a silent teacher, and observing children soon learn that the people care more for their homes and school buildings than they do for the church and the program for which it stands. Pride in the appearance

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of the building and grounds helps to increase their appreciation of what the church stands for.

The equipment and arrangement of space on the inside indicates the importance which the church attaches to its children. When one discovers small chairs attractively arranged in a space that has been cleared of benches, a low table near by, bookshelves or cabinet with material neatly arranged, a few vases for flowers, and a few pictures which can be very quickly removed from sight if necessary, he knows without being told that children in that church are having some of the opportunities which they need.

SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR CHILDREN

The whole church, not just the teachers of children, is responsible for providing space and equipment for children's groups. If adults continue to use the one separate room, it is often because they do not realize the children's needs. If they insist on keeping all the children together in the church auditorium when separate space is available and could be used for them, it is usually because they do not realize how much the children need more time for worship, songs, stories, verses, and activities on a level with their understanding.

1. *The health of children demands cleanliness and com-*

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fort. At no time should they be subjected to poor ventilation, uncomfortable and unsightly surroundings.

2. *Children respond quickly to beauty.* To some children the church will be the prettiest place they see during the whole week. Their response of joy and happiness to attractive surroundings is immediate. It is very difficult to talk about beauty in God's world and about helping God make the world beautiful and happy in the presence of that which is ugly and uncomfortable.

3. *A definite place gives little children a sense of security, a sense of ownership, and a sense of belonging.*

4. *Children do not speak for themselves.* They will not raise objections to any provision the church makes for them. Others will be their representatives when any plan for them is being made; therefore, wherever possible, a definite place for each group of children should be made as comfortable, attractive, and spacious as the church can provide.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE ONE-ROOM CHURCH

The following will suggest ways in which the above principles can be used to some extent in the one-room church:

1. *Corners make possible a good arrangement for children's groups.* At least two corners in almost any church can be used in this way. If the choir uses the space on

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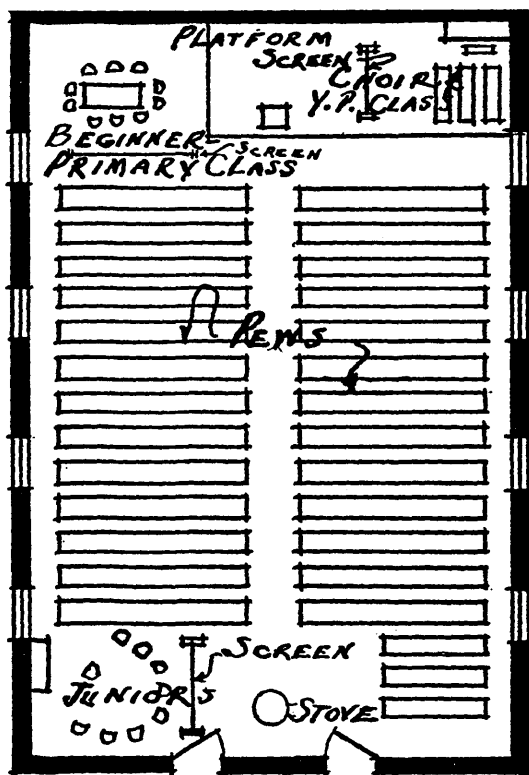
one side of the pulpit, it is often possible to clear the opposite corner of benches and to provide a low table and chairs for the beginners or the beginner-primary class, if this combination must be made. It is sometimes possible to arrange one of the corners at the back of the room in a similar way for another group.

If this corner space can include a window, it is all the more attractive. Sometimes a wall pocket of flowers can be hung on the side of the window; a nicely framed picture can also be hung low on the wall for the children to enjoy, and becomes an additional item of beauty for the entire congregation. It should be remembered, however, that the picture is primarily for children, and therefore it will be hung low.

A low screen can sometimes be used to separate this corner space from the rest of the church. This screen can be quickly placed and afterward set against the wall during the church service. Such a screen provides a space on which pictures not framed can be fastened when needed.

2. *Pulpit or choir space can sometimes be used.* As in the case of the corner arrangement, chairs and screens can be used to make either of these spaces attractive.

3. *Foot rests for benches of regulation height provide comfort when chairs are not possible.* No church should expect children to sit upon benches which will not permit their feet to touch the floor.



A good arrangement for a beginner-primary class near the front and a junior class at the back has been made in this one-room church. Lines indicate light screens that can be set against the wall when necessary.

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DISCOVERING OTHER AVAILABLE SPACE

1. *An extra room is sometimes available.* Many small churches have a room back of the pulpit which they have not thought of using for children. Too often such a room is filled with discarded songbooks, broken benches, old stoves and stovepipes, and lamp fixtures. The useful items of this material could be stored in a box and the room cleared of rubbish and used for a beginner or a beginner-primary group.

2. *Sometimes the church owns an outside building.* One group of workers saw possibilities in a little room which had once been built and used for acetylene lights. The church had afterward been lighted with electricity, so this little room was no longer needed. When cleared of its original machinery, it made a most attractive room for the beginners, and real worship and happy times occurred there.

Another group discovered a shed which needed only a floor to make of it a room quite satisfactory for children.

3. *Shade trees near the church provide attractive spots for children's groups* to meet during many months in the year. It is easy to think of God and his beautiful world in the presence of evidences of his creative work.

4. *Near-by buildings can sometimes be secured.* If the church is near a public school building, it is sometimes possible to secure the use of a room or rooms for the chil-

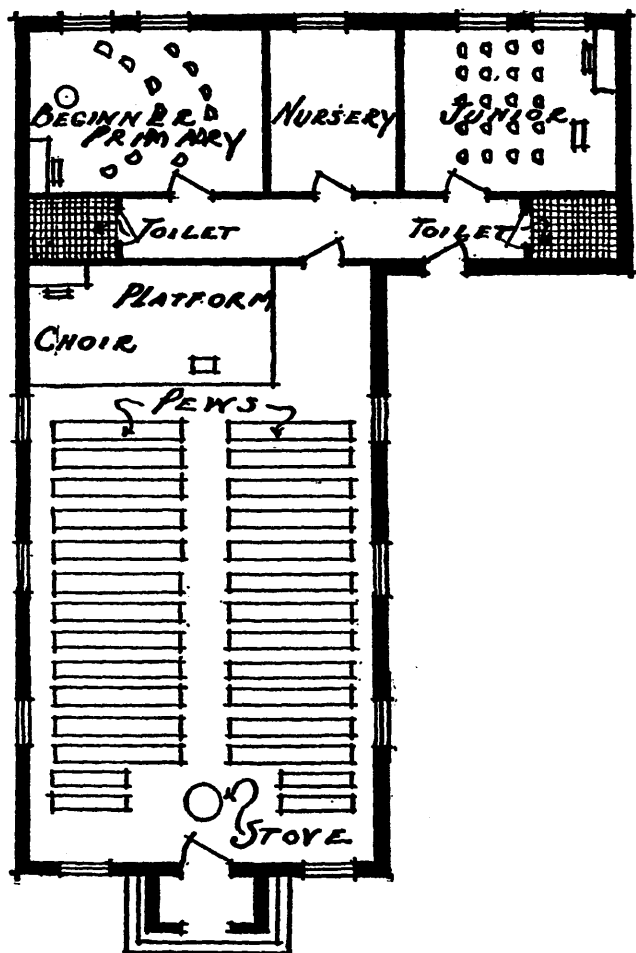
dren's groups of the Sunday school. Sometimes a home quite near the church has a wide, shady porch or a room which it can make available for one or more groups. A vacant cottage can sometimes be secured.

Their best chance for worship, for planning, for singing occurs when children can be removed from other groups; and the shade trees, the shady porch, or the room of the near-by building becomes for them a place of real worship. In these situations the leaders of the church should stir themselves in order that any such provision may be regarded as temporary and that no time be lost in providing a space which in reality belongs to the church family.

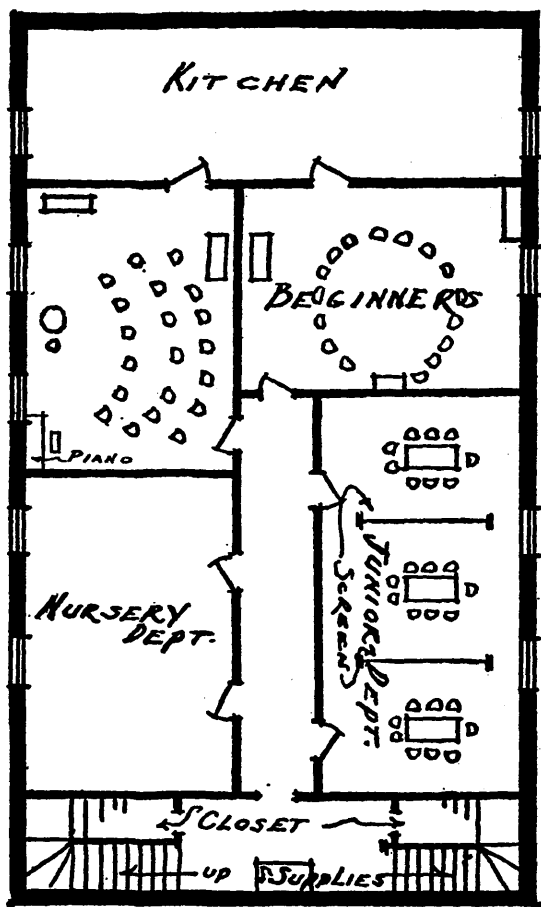
REMODELING OR BUILDING

Sometimes without a great outlay of money, conditions can be greatly improved.

1. *By adding a room or by building new partitions, separate spaces can often be provided.* The following drawings are suggestive of changes which can be made without great cost. It will be noticed that every group can reach its own space without having to pass through that used by another group. This arrangement is very desirable.



An inexpensive addition to a one-room church provides adequate space for children's groups.



A ground floor divided by partitions or removable screens to provide for all groups in the children's division.

PROVIDING SPACE AND EQUIPMENT

2. When a new building is decided upon, the advice of persons who know the needs of children should be secured.

It is easy to borrow the blueprints from a neighboring community that has just completed a church, and it is also easy to secure a local carpenter to put up a plain building with a few additional rooms, but every new building should be the result of more careful consideration of local needs. The following suggestions should prove helpful:

a. Build for the future. A careful estimate of the present membership, with a proportionate addition to allow for a reasonable increase, should be made. In making this estimate the approximate number for the various age-groups should be considered in order that when the plan is drawn it can be known in advance that a particular space is being provided for the beginners, another for the primaries, another for the juniors, and another for the adolescent groups.

b. Allow at least seventeen square feet for each pupil in children's rooms. One community has reason to be very proud of its attractive new church from the standpoint of appearance alone, but the space provided for children is so overcrowded that, as far as they are concerned, the old building was very much better.

c. At least one children's worker should be on the committee planning the building. This should be a person on

whose judgment the others will rely and who will be willing to secure information from the best authorities available to help the church decide what arrangement is best.

USING EXTRA SPACE

1. *If one extra room or space is available, it should be used for beginners, unless it has seemed desirable to combine the beginner and primary groups.* In either case the little children for whom an extra room is provided should spend the entire session in their own room. Understanding adults will have just as much satisfaction in knowing that the church has made it possible for these little children to have an opportunity for worship, planning, working with God as they formerly had in having them sit through the worship service of the whole school. If a beginner-primary department can be formed, one teacher becomes superintendent of the department and assumes the responsibility of leading the group in worship. The two groups can then be separated within their own room for at least thirty minutes of the time for class work. More will be said about this plan of work in Chapter VI.

2. *If two rooms are available, it is probable that one of them should be used for beginners and the other for primary children.* If, however, one of the rooms is large enough to have a beginner-primary department, then the second room could be used for the juniors.

PROVIDING SPACE AND EQUIPMENT

3. *If three rooms are available for children's groups, it is probably best to use them for the beginner, primary, and junior children.* If, however, it seems desirable to combine the beginner and primary groups into a beginner-primary department, it might be possible to make a room available for the children younger than four and have a nursery department at the church school. All these are but suggestive, and, as in the case of grouping, the number of children plays a large part in determining the best use of extra space.

EQUIPMENT

Inadequate equipment, too much equipment, and unsuitable or inappropriate equipment, all interfere with the best type of work. No single phase of the church's provision for its children can contribute more largely to the happiness, comfort, and well-being, as well as to the accompanying ideas of love for the church and what it stands for, than adequate and suitable equipment.

1. *Chairs of proper height are always needed.* The physical well-being of children demands that when seated their feet will touch the floor. The following standard heights will serve as a guide:

- a. For beginners, ten inches high.
- b. For primaries, twelve to fourteen inches high.
- c. For juniors, fourteen to sixteen inches high.

Collapsible chairs are not desirable. A well-made chair with a curved back and a rounded front edge where the limbs hang over is much to be preferred. If chairs cannot be secured, or if no space is available for chairs, short benches of the proper height, or foot rests if the regular church pews must be used, will add greatly to the comfort of children.

A junior class found great pleasure in covering small boxes for the beginners to use in their corner. It is true these seats were without backs, but they could be arranged so that the bench itself gave some support when needed, and it was easy to push them under a bench when not in use.

2. *Screens sometimes help to provide a separate space.* They should be light in weight so that they can be easily moved, and need not be more than four feet high. If the building is not crowded, small screens placed on the benches instead of between them can be lighter in weight and more easily handled. Beaver board or some other composition board used for building can be used satisfactorily provided that it is properly stripped to prevent warping. Such screens can be made by a local carpenter. The woodwork can be finished in harmony with the woodwork of the room. Screens not only give the group a feeling of separateness, which makes it possible for better

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work to go on, but also serve as display boards for pictures needed by the class at each session.

3. *A table is desirable where the space permits.* As in the case of chairs, tables should be suited to the children using them. The following heights will serve as a guide:

- a. For beginners, twenty inches.
- b. For primaries, twenty-two inches.
- c. For juniors, twenty-five to twenty-seven inches.

It is not necessary to have tables large enough for the entire class to gather around, although adequate space sometimes makes this possible. A rectangular table 24x48 inches can be placed against the wall and used for flowers, for the pictures which the class needs for each session, for the offering basket, and for the story papers to be given out at the close of the class session, or it may be used in the center of the group when desired. If a separate room is provided, there may be need for several tables, but an overcrowded condition in a separate room is sometimes relieved by the removal of tables. It is evident, therefore, that the space to be used would determine the advisability of providing a table.

4. *Every church needs a place where material can be put away between Sundays.* Workers with children will have extra pictures, pencils, scissors, offering baskets, vases, record books, music, and sometimes things which the children have made, such as drawings, scrapbooks, posters, all

of which need to be put away at the church. Deep shelves with doors, a bookcase, or cabinet have been used to meet this need.

A class which met in one of the rear corners of a one-room church found that a long, low box that could be pushed under the back bench served as a convenient place to leave their things between Sundays.

If one bookcase, or cabinet, or set of shelves is to be used by the whole school, it is very desirable that each class have a special section or shelf and be responsible for its care. The orderly arrangement not only saves time when an article is needed, but becomes another silent teacher.

It is sometimes possible to find corridor space which can be converted into a small room or closet or where ample cabinet space for each class or department can be provided. Where separate rooms are available, it is usually possible to have a separate supply cabinet for each room.

5. *A piano is desirable when a separate room is provided.* This does not mean, however, that a piano should be the determining factor in deciding whether worship can be held in a separate room. It certainly contributes largely to any worship service, but children can enjoy singing without a piano if none is available.

An organ is not suitable for use with children. The melody is difficult to follow and often leads to unnatural

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singing and uncertain tones. When the church buys a new organ, the old one should be sold and not moved into the children's rooms. If a piano is used, it should by all means be kept in tune and protected from abuse.

6. *If a corner or separate room is provided for children of the nursery age, a floor covering will be needed.* The natural place for young children to sit is on the floor, and there is no reason why they should not sit on the floor at church. A few low chairs, a box with a top on hinges into which their blocks and quiet toys can be kept, together with the pictures and scrapbooks, will enable the person responsible for this work to keep materials in order. Such material is valuable even when no space is provided. A tired mother welcomes this provision, which enables her to discover something with which a fretful child can play.

OTHER CONVENIENCES

1. *A place for hats and wraps should be provided, if possible.* Children are much more comfortable and natural if hats and wraps can be removed—provided, of course, the building is well heated. Teachers also are much more natural without hats. They can always be removed if a separate room is used.

Substantial hooks along a section of the wall at the rear or along the back bench are provided in many one-room churches. A group of juniors made a nice hatrack by nail-

ing spools about eight inches apart to a long strip which was then fastened to the wall about four feet from the floor. A shelf along the wall in the corridor, with hooks underneath, makes a good place for hats and wraps.

2. *Children enjoy attractive containers for the offering.* Baskets, small bowls, or boxes neatly covered and lined have been used for this purpose. One group of children painted pie pans, glued circles of blue blotting paper inside, and presented one to each children's class.

3. *Extra vases are needed.* Wall pockets also furnish an attractive container for flowers. Cans and bottles of convenient size and shapes, painted green, blue, or black, are more suitable than many of the tall, slender vases which can easily be upset and which hold only a few flowers. The children will enjoy painting these containers at a week-day session or in the vacation school.

PROVIDING BEAUTY

The teacher is not always responsible if the space assigned to her group is not adequate, but she is probably responsible more than any other one person for the arrangement, care, good taste, and beauty.

The following principles may suggest simple ways of securing beauty and harmony, which are contributing factors to joy, satisfaction, and worship.

1. *Give preference to the real rather than the artificial.*

PROVIDING SPACE AND EQUIPMENT

From the variety of things in nature—wild flowers, garden flowers, leaves, ferns, growing plants, bulbs, pine cones, birds' nests, shells, pretty rocks, all of which bring their message of a God-centered world—it should be possible to have something beautiful for the children to enjoy every time they come to the church. Crêpe paper is more suitable for parties than for church decorations where fellowship and worship are sought.

2. *Choose the simple and substantial rather than the frail and ornate.* Simple furniture, matching the woodwork of the room or finished in ivory if a separate room is provided and more light is needed, is appropriate. Regular shapes, rectangular or round, are better for tables than the irregular, fancy shapes.

3. *A few pictures carefully chosen are better than many used at one time.* It is well to have a number from which to select, but those not needed each Sunday should be put away in the box or cabinet. An attractive little room used by beginners had sixty-five pictures tacked to the wall. The visitor was sure that the children could not enjoy so many at one time. Many of them were beyond their line of vision, and many were not suited to children of this age. It was evident that this was either the teacher's idea of decorating the room or that she had no place for her material. A set of pictures accompanies the lesson materials for beginners and for primaries. The teacher

can always have at least this many from which selection can be made. Sometimes the same picture can be used many times, and there may be some in every set which the teacher will decide not to use. They are very much more convenient for use if each picture is neatly mounted on cardboard or stiff paper. Those that come in a roll are much more easily handled if cut apart and mounted separately.

4. *Shades will probably be needed where separate rooms are used.* If the glare is too great, duplex shades, green on one side and white or ivory on the other, may be needed; otherwise a shade which will harmonize with the wall finish, such as cream, buff, or tan, is good. If curtains are needed, the general principle of durability and simplicity should be followed. Marquisette, theatrical gauze, pongee, and casement cloth represent a range of quality and price from which selection can be made.

5. *Children should have a part in the arrangement and care of their room.* Frequently in this chapter mention has been made of the things groups of children did or can do in connection with equipment. Whatever their space or equipment, they can be helped to develop a sense of possession, a sense of pride, and a feeling of responsibility, all of which contribute to their growing understanding and love for the church. This means more than taking up the offering, passing out the papers, and taking turns in bring-

PROVIDING SPACE AND EQUIPMENT

ing flowers from the field or from their own homes. Every child should be encouraged to bring flowers and other nature objects whenever he can. There should always be enough vases or bowls, and they should always help to arrange them. They can share them with other children's groups and perhaps join with the class in deciding who shall have the flowers after Sunday school. Perhaps the flowers can be used to advantage during the church service; they can be sent to an absent or sick member; they can be given to a new member or visitor. Frequently, of course, the children will want to give them to the teacher.

Children can assist in arranging the chairs and in rearranging them when necessary after the class is over. They can see that all materials are put away when the session is over, and perhaps can have a part in choosing the picture they would like to hang on the wall near their class. A good teacher will plan many other ways for the children to participate in the care of the room, remembering that by so doing she will probably accomplish some of the Christian desires for children that can be accomplished in no other way.

OVERCOMING DIFFICULTIES

The contents of this chapter will probably lift to the fore problems not here mentioned for which the local

workers alone can find a solution. The following general suggestions may be found helpful:

1. *If the adults are occupying just the very space which should be made suitable for some group of children*, perhaps a frank talk with the most influential member of that class will help.

2. *If the space allotted for a group of children is overcrowded*, and if separation of the group or provision for more space is needed, invite the school superintendent, chairman of the official board, the pastor, or other influential leader to visit the session next Sunday, and afterward talk with him about what the children are missing because of the crowded condition.

3. *If a new table or a few more chairs are needed*, and if there simply isn't any money which could be used in this way, make a survey of your acquaintances and friends of children to see if someone has a table which could be donated. Do not accept a frail or unsuitable table, however. The legs of a kitchen table can be sawed down to proper height. Cast-off chairs can be mended, and a cast-off bench might furnish the material from which a good table could be made by a local carpenter. Material for shelves might also be discovered in the same way.

4. *If the church leaders seem indifferent*, perhaps the pastor can secure some practical Sunday school workers who will hold an institute at the church and bring before

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the group helpful, stimulating plans which others in similar situations have tried with success.

5. If you are discouraged when you compare your space and equipment with that which you would like to have, and if you feel like giving up because the prospects of improvement seem hopeless, sit down and have a talk with yourself and God. Are you willing to give up a job because it is hard? Are the children in your community worth as much in the family of God as any other children anywhere? If you give up, what chance will they have for the guidance which they need? If you cannot do everything that you would like to do, select one little thing that you can do and do it. Never give up.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Describe briefly some specific change in space, equipment, or arrangement which is both desirable and possible in your church, and list the steps you would take or the things you would do in order to bring it about.

2. Send a description of some convenience which is used for children's work in your church to the Division of Children's Work of your church board.

3. Considering the space, the number of children, and the activities desirable for the class session, is a table needed? If so, write a description, giving dimensions, which could be followed by a local carpenter.

4. The following represent real situations. Tell what could be done in each case:

a. The space used by one or more children's groups is also used for the church social occasions.

b. New building wholly inadequate and full of mistakes.

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c. Equipment already on hand not suitable.

d. A generous person donates an organ or unsuitable furniture for the use of children's groups.

e. An enlarged picture of a former beloved pastor hangs where some picture for children should hang.

f. Classrooms too many and too small.

g. Attractive space, but so crowded with children that good work is impossible.

h. All the children of the church in one large room beneath the church auditorium.

i. Local church leaders wholly satisfied with inadequate or poor arrangement.

j. Adults, dissatisfied with disturbance from children's classes, decided to build an extra room for themselves, leaving the children in the church auditorium.

k. False sentiment about keeping things as they are.

5. A new family moved into the neighborhood and were invited to bring their children to Sunday school. Before Sunday came they went to the church to see what provision had been made for children. They found a space six feet below ground, next to the furnace, equipped with narrow benches, all the same height. A pile of coal was in the corner near the furnace. The windows were about the size of transoms and next to the ceiling. A dust-covered organ was piled high with old songbooks which contained no songs for children. The mother remarked sadly: "I guess we'd better not send them. They've never been in a place like this, and I'd hate for them to hear it called God's house." Was she right?

CHAPTER IV

TEACHERS OF CHILDREN

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

1. What persons in your church do you consider best qualified to teach children?
2. Why do goodness, willingness, and faithfulness not constitute all that is to be desired in a teacher of children? What other qualifications would you add?
3. How and when were the present teachers in your school selected?
4. What have they done within the last year to become better teachers?
5. What other persons than teachers in your Sunday school cause children to think, act, or feel differently? What persons, then, are really teaching children in your Sunday school?

EVERY person who causes a child to think, act, or feel differently is a teacher of that child. Primary in importance among such teachers are parents. During those years before others touch the lives of their children, and during the many days and hours between the brief sessions of the Sunday school, they are causing children to form ideas and habits. Casual visitors in the home, pastors, older boys and girls, and adults in the church are also teaching them. The grouping of children for work in the Sunday school, however, necessitates the selection of persons to be called *teachers* who shall be responsible for studying the needs and planning the work of each group.

While these teachers are primarily in mind during the discussion which shall follow, all persons who touch the lives of children should remember that they, too, are teaching, and often when they least suspect it.

THE NATURE OF THE TEACHER'S TASK

The best teachers work with, not against, the nature of the child. Because a child likes to find out about things, a good teacher will plan to help him become interested in things which he can find out about God's world, about other people who live in God's world, and about things which are pleasing to God. Because a child is naturally full of energy and activity, a good teacher will try to help him use this energy and activity in doing things for other people, for the church, and for his parents. Because a child likes to succeed and win the approval of others, a good teacher will try to protect him from undertaking impossible tasks, but will lead him into those things which he can complete through his own efforts. Because a child is interested in people and in things they do, a good teacher will try to help him become acquainted, through stories, perhaps, with people who do things to make the world better and happier. Because a child likes to make plans and to carry out his plans, a good teacher will help him make plans which will add to the happiness and joy of other people and which will be pleasing to God. Because a child seems

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naturally trusting, sympathetic, and friendly, a good teacher will help him to use these qualities wisely in relieving the discomfort and unhappiness of others and in being helpful to all whom he knows. Because a child seems to have a spiritual nature which meets and feels at home with God, a good teacher will try to help him know God, not as a magician, but as the loving Father whom Jesus revealed, and who depends upon all his children to do his work in the world. Moreover, she will seek to develop in each child a vital Christian experience.

Teaching cannot, therefore, be thought of as "hearing lessons" or as "making children behave"; instead, it is thought of as a co-operative task with God himself in helping each life come to its highest and best. More than willingness and faithfulness are needed by the person who is expecting to help a child in the ways mentioned above.

DESIRABLE QUALITIES FOR TEACHERS OF CHILDREN

The following desirable qualities for teachers of children are listed with the hope that they will aid in the selection of teachers and also help persons already holding this responsible office to become better teachers. A vital Christian experience and a sincere desire to have a part in making more vital the religious experiences of boys and girls is essential. One's ability to look through the immediate, perplexing problems with an eye of faith in God's

eternal goodness and a feeling of identity with his great purpose and plan is an equipment for service in the Kingdom of God. Children are sensitive to the presence or absence of Christian faith in the lives of adults around them.

1. *Sincerity and joy.* Sincerity and joy are qualities which seem to call forth like qualities in children.

2. *Culture, training, and background that compare favorably with that of public school teachers.* Certainly God honors any offering of faithful service to him, but the service of guiding lives demands effort, ability, and skill.

3. *Sincere interest in children.* This does not mean a sentimental attitude which finds expression in empty phrases, such as "I just love children," or "Aren't they precious?" Those who find real joy in fellowship, worship, work, and play with children will find their own lives enriched by this fellowship.

4. *Conviction that children and their needs are of more importance than any lesson material or plan.*

5. *Willingness to abandon or change methods which do not help children.* Busy work, memory drills, and special "programs" for children have too often been used as ends in themselves. A good teacher will not use any plan just to fill up time or because the teachers of her own childhood used it. Each item of the plan will be considered in the light of the effect it will have upon the children.

6. *Willingness to study, to share ideas and material, and to go beyond what is expected.* The teacher who desires to make a list of her "duties" and then check them off as they are accomplished will not find much joy in her work. The eagerness with which a successful plan is shared and with which a teacher does what needs to be done, without waiting to be asked, is a sign of real, creative living.

7. *Freedom from discouragement.* Happy, cheerful, co-operative, not concerned about recognition, rights, and prerogatives—such is the teacher whom everybody likes to have around, whose value to a church cannot be estimated, and whose joy in living is sure to increase.

PLAN OF WORK AND NEEDED LEADERSHIP FOR VARIOUS AGES

The following brief plans of work for the various ages within the children's division will indicate some specific qualities desired for the workers with each age group.

1. *Nursery Department Superintendent.*—Since the major part of the work for children younger than four is in the home, every church can have a nursery department, whether or not it has a place at the church for children so young. The person made responsible for this work is correctly called a nursery department superintendent. Since her work relates to children in the home, a mother should be selected for this position, if possible. A person

who appreciates the importance of early childhood, who is tactful, who is careful not to give advice unless it is wanted, will be able to render definite service to young children. She will add each year to her acquaintance with the books, the periodicals, and the pamphlets of particular interest to parents of young children; will seek every opportunity to acquaint parents with this material, and also with county and community opportunities related to the welfare of young children; and will provide, if possible, frequent opportunities for groups of parents to study together the best methods of guiding young children.

If there are many homes to be visited, the superintendent will need assistants. A careful record of the members of this department; the practice of remembering birthdays with a card, note, or visit; and a continuous effort to keep before all parents the importance of the Christian home—these indicate more specific duties of this superintendent and her assistants.

If the church has a space where children younger than four can assemble on Sunday morning, this worker will make of it a kind of nursery where the children can be cared for while the mothers are in classes. She will not urge the attendance of young children upon the Sunday school, but will try to make those who come comfortable and happy. (See Chapter VI for a fuller discussion of the nursery group on Sunday morning.) She will attend

workers' meetings, training schools, and institutes that are within reach.

2. Teacher of Beginners.—A person who understands little children; who realizes the importance of early childhood; who realizes that ways of teaching little children are changing very rapidly; who will collect and learn songs suitable for them; who is able to tell a story in a simple, direct way; who is able to use a picture, a song, or a moment of prayer in a way that little children can enjoy and participate—such a person is desirable as a teacher of beginners. She will have charge of the four- and five-year-old children of the Sunday school, will visit in their homes, and thus be able to make the Sunday session more helpful. She should share with parents the books and magazines which she has found helpful. She should attend workers' meetings, training schools, and institutes which are within reach.

3. Teacher of Primary Children.—A person who understands children of the primary ages; who realizes the importance of these years when the horizon is widened by contacts with the public schools; who is willing to learn better ways of working with them; who can tell a story in a simple, direct manner; who can plan with children things they can do for each other, for their homes, for their church, and for other friends; who can use a picture, a song, a verse, and moments of real worship in such

a way that the children participate and enjoy it—such a person should be found to teach the primary class. She will have charge of the primary children of the Sunday school and will seek to develop the lives of these children in every possible way. Extra meetings during the week or vacation time will be one way of developing friendly relations between children and teacher and also give the children a chance to practice courtesy, kindness, and helpfulness. This teacher will select and help children to learn a few songs which are within their understanding; she will visit the homes of the pupils and, if possible, the public school which the children attend; she will attend the workers' meetings, training schools, and institutes which are within reach.

4. *Teacher of Junior Children.*—A person who understands boys and girls, who enjoys play and can sometimes meet with the class during the week for good times, who is willing to learn better ways of working with boys and girls, whom the children will respect and admire, should be chosen as the teacher of juniors. He will have charge of the junior class of the Sunday school, will be responsible for developing the lives of the junior boys and girls in every possible way. Parties and hikes or occasional weekday meetings at the church to carry out some plan which could not be carried out on Sunday, to learn a passage of scripture or a song for use in the worship service are good

ways of developing friendly relations. This teacher will visit the homes and, if possible, the public school which the children attend and will attend workers' meetings, training schools, and institutes which are within reach.

THE TEACHER'S RELATIONSHIPS

It is very desirable that every church have a Committee on Children's Work. In most small churches the teachers of the children's classes will be members of this committee. If, however, there is a large number of teachers, or if there is a departmental organization, one representing each age-group should make up this committee. This committee is responsible for continuous study and planning together in order that constant improvement may be made in the provision and plan of work for children. Reports to the Local Church Board of Christian Education should be made at least quarterly. By working and planning together, this committee will be able to discover ways of improvement and co-operation which no one teacher alone could bring to pass.

The following paragraphs will indicate other relationships of the teachers of children's classes:

1. *To the Sunday School and Church as a Whole.*—Every teacher should be able to see her particular responsibility as a part of the entire program of the local church. Her loyalty to the whole church is in no way

lessened by her feeling of responsibility for a particular group. In this way she will be able to help the church consider the needs of all the children of the church as well as of the particular group which she teaches. She will not seek for her own particular group the best equipment and the most desirable place without considering what is best for all other groups of children in the church.

A teacher should be an active church worker, but should not assume so many responsibilities that she cannot give her first and best service to the children whom the church has asked her to guide in a vital way. If her dominant objective is to lead boys and girls into a more satisfying relationship with God and into a vital Christian experience, she will let nothing interfere with this service.

A teacher should attend and participate in the services of the church and all workers' meetings. Reports to workers' meetings should consist of whatever statistical items may be called for—such as number on roll, number added since last report, names dropped since last report, average attendance—any particular situation which prevents effective work in her class, and ways in which the teacher is trying to carry forward the work.

2. *To the Homes and Community.*—Every teacher should make it a point to know personally the parents and other members of each family represented in her class, and should let the parents know that she is not taking

lightly her responsibility. She should know and confer with public school teachers, if her pupils are of school age; should keep informed about, and, if possible, participate in, community activities which affect the development of her pupils.

3. *To Pupils and Other Boys and Girls.*—Every teacher should value highly her friendship with boys and girls; she should be able to convince them by word and deed that she stands for what she talks about; she should win, but hold sacred, their confidence; she should read books of interest to them, share with them her own stories and books, and think of herself as a guide rather than as an instructor.

4. *To Other Teachers of Children.*—Every teacher should work in harmony with the committee on children's work. The co-operation of teachers will lead to a better understanding of their work, and in many cases to a better provision on the part of the church for its children.

DISCOVERING, ENLISTING, AND TRAINING QUALIFIED PERSONS FOR WORK WITH CHILDREN

The Local Church Board of Christian Education is responsible for selecting and electing teachers. This election should occur annually, preferably in September, even though the same teacher may be re-elected year after year. This annual election of teachers at a definite time will help

to convince teachers, children, parents, and the community at large that the church has a definite plan for its school. Some Sunday following the election of teachers all officers and teachers should be called to the chancel of the church by the pastor, and a simple service of dedication to a new year's work should be held.

The following suggestions should lead to the discovery, enlistment, and training of the best qualified persons for work with children:

1. *Make good work possible by providing adequate space and material.* Many good teachers become discouraged and give up their work simply because they feel that good work is impossible in the situation which the church has provided.

2. *Encourage good teachers to specialize in one age-group.* It is seldom wise for a teacher to be promoted at the end of the year with her class. By teaching the primary class year after year a teacher becomes increasingly skilful in understanding and working with children of this age. Her friendship for her class need not be lessened when they are promoted. Every group of children needs contact with every good teacher, but this is possible only when a teacher is encouraged to increase her effectiveness for work with a given age-group.

3. *Make a list of all available persons who might be enlisted as teachers.* Sometimes a new family moves into

the community during the year; a public school teacher may be available; a mother who could not teach while her children were very young may now be ready for service because of the increased age of her children. A survey of the church roll, of all families in the community, of members of other churches not within reach of a church of their own denomination, of acquaintances in nearby towns whose relationship to the local church is such that their service would be welcomed, might lead to a discovery of well-qualified persons.

4. *Free the time of qualified persons from other duties.* Sometimes a person well qualified to work with children has been made secretary of the Sunday school or has accepted some other office more easily filled. A careful consideration of all official positions may lead to an adjustment of responsibility which will make available for the children's classes persons now engaged in work elsewhere.

MEANS OF GROWTH AND SELF-IMPROVEMENT FOR TEACHERS

Every teacher who desires to become a better teacher can do so. The person who is willing to learn, who varies her plans, who is willing to try a new idea, who is not willing to teach Sunday school today just as she was taught in her own childhood, is sure to become a better teacher. The

following suggestions should lead to better work on the part of all, but the first essential is a *desire* to improve:

1. *Visit other good teachers.* It is sometimes possible to visit a good public school teacher just to see how she uses materials, how she works with children, and how she develops a fine, friendly feeling which makes good work possible. It is also sometimes possible to visit another good Sunday school teacher either in a smaller or a larger church. Such a visit should not lead to discouragement if the teacher visited has more space and equipment, or to a feeling of satisfaction if the teacher has less space and equipment. From either of these situations a teacher may get some good idea, if that is her purpose in visiting.

2. *Attend institutes and conferences where Sunday school work will be discussed or studied.* Few churches are beyond the reach of these opportunities. A teacher who attends with the purpose of getting help is sure to get it in the worship service, in some discussion, in an individual conference with another teacher, or in some pamphlet, magazine, or book which is distributed or discussed during the day.

3. *Read and study the introduction to the lesson helps and periodicals that are available.* In these sections the lesson writer often gives the plan of the lessons for the quarter or even for the year. An earnest effort to try the plan suggested, a willingness to consider why it succeeded

or why it failed, and a willingness to try again are evidences of a desire to do better work.

4. *Think of the different ways of using time, space, and equipment.* It is a poor teacher who begins every session with the question, "What was last Sunday's lesson about?" Keep a list of the ways in which you do begin, of the questions children ask, of the ways in which you can help them find the answers to their questions, or perhaps of the ways in which you can get them to ask more questions. A picture is usually available for every Sunday with the beginner and primary groups. Perhaps some of these pictures can be used many times during the quarter, and some others not so helpful will not be used at all. Sometimes other suitable pictures can be found on calendars and magazine covers. A good teacher is not bound by any form of procedure, but seeks to vary her ways, to use again those that succeed, and to change or discontinue those which seem to have been less valuable.

5. *Confer with associates.* By sharing materials and plans those who work with children will find that they can help each other become better teachers.

6. *Take training courses.* Listen for news of training schools in nearby churches. Sometimes two or more churches unite in having a training school or class. A single church can always have a class. Individual or group study by correspondence is also possible.

SUGGESTIONS FOR EVERY GOOD TEACHER

1. Every good teacher seeks to be present at least ten or fifteen minutes before the hour set for the opening of the Sunday school.

2. Every good teacher assumes some responsibility for the care and arrangement of the space and material to be used by her group. A part of this plan will provide for some participation on the part of the children.

3. Every good teacher tries to understand thoroughly the general purpose and plan of the lesson material used by her group. This will include that provided for the children as well as the helps provided for the teacher.

4. Every good teacher seeks to protect children from participation in special programs that will lead to wrong ideas and attitudes.

5. Every good teacher prepares for her work over a long period of time rather than week by week. She collects in advance pictures, nature objects, and other material which will be needed, and becomes familiar with the lesson material for the whole quarter and sometimes for an even longer period.

6. Every good teacher knows her pupils outside of Sunday school; she visits their homes, their schools, and seeks in every way to become familiar with their week-day problems and activities.

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7. Every good teacher tries to develop a spirit of friendly co-operation within her group.

8. Every good teacher co-operates with the school by keeping accurate records and by attending and participating in meetings of workers.

9. Every good teacher keeps informed about the best recommendations and methods of work and seeks continuously to become a better teacher.

10. Every good teacher seeks continuously to achieve a higher degree of Christlikeness in all the relationships of her life.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Why do the qualifications of teachers for different age-groups differ?

2. Why is it important for a teacher not to be absent without notifying someone else in time for that person to prepare for the Sunday session?

3. What evidence have you had that boys and girls of your class like to find out about things? What have they found out since they have been in your class?

4. What evidence have you that the boys and girls in your class like to do what other people do? How have you used pictures and stories to suggest helpful things for them to do?

5. What evidence do you have that the boys and girls in your class desire approval? How have you used this desire to bring about a more helpful attitude on the part of the members of your group?

6. What evidence do you have that they like to make plans and to carry out their plans? What plans have they been able to make and carry out since they have been members of your class?

7. What evidence have you that the boys and girls of your class

CHILDREN'S WORK IN THE CHURCH

have a real spiritual nature? What have you done to help them grow in their consciousness of God and in their desire to worship and serve him? Has Jesus become more real to them?

8. Name two books you would recommend for workers with children to read; two which you would like to recommend for parents of children.

9. What can you do to interest workers in your school in taking training?

10. What plans for week-day meetings with children seem most practicable for your church?

11. What denominational pamphlets are available for nursery, beginner, primary, and junior workers?

12. What training courses are available? How can they be taken?

CHAPTER V

MEANING AND BASIS OF WORSHIP

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

1. What things, places, persons, or experiences make you think about God or feel that he is very near?

2. What things, places, persons, or experiences do you think will help children think about God or feel that he is very near? Which of these can be used to help the children of your church worship him?

A GROUP of children younger than six had helped the teacher during their class session at Sunday school to plant nasturtium seed in a plot of rich earth. They had talked about what it would take to make them grow, and had asked Mrs. Jones, who lived next door, to water the pot and take care of it during the week. The next Sunday those who came early went for it, in order that the children might see that it was moist and warm and might talk again about what was going to happen. On the third Sunday the little group was truly reverent in the presence of the tiny green stems and leaves which had come above the earth during the week. Again they talked about their part and about God's part. They bowed their heads and worshiped while the teacher said: "We're glad, Heavenly Father, that we know how to help you make things grow. Amen." In two more weeks buds had appeared, and on that day the children carried the pot to the front of the

church, where all could see the pretty green leaves and the tiny buds. During the worship service, when all the people were together, the children sat with the teacher near the front. She stood up and said that the children were sharing with them the pot of flowers which they loved and which they were helping God take care of. Again the children worshiped while the teacher said: "Dear Heavenly Father, our pot of flowers makes us think about you. We're glad it helps other people to think about you too. Amen."

A primary class had assembled, and the offering was being taken. Mary took a tiny basket and went around the circle for each to put in his offering, and then stood near the teacher, who said: "Our money today will be put with the money from all the other classes and with some other people's money so the children in a far-away land can have Sunday school papers. You know how we like our Sunday school papers. Theirs will have pictures on them, but the print will not be like ours. But we know they will like them, and we're so glad that in one way we can help them learn about God." The children were thinking about how glad they were because they could add their money to other people's money to help other children know about God, while the teacher said: "Heavenly Father, we want all the children every-

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where to know about you. We're so glad that our money can help to pay for the Sunday school papers for other children. We hope they will learn to love you too. Amen."

It was the Sunday before Thanksgiving. The beginners were seated with their teacher in their little chairs to one side of the pulpit; the primary children were together on the front benches; the juniors filled three benches back of the primaries; the young people and adults were grouped back of the children. The following worship service had been planned with all ages in mind, and the leader moved from one part of it to another in a dignified but sincere manner:

Song: "O Worship the King."

Psalm 100: Read by juniors and older groups.

Talk by teacher of primary class. A picture of children looking through the window at a starry sky was placed so that all could see it, and the teacher talked about how glad we were that God gave us the night so the birds and little children could rest.

Songs by beginner and primary groups: "God, Our Father, Made the Night"; ¹ "Father, We Thank Thee for the Night."

Prayer by the leader. Thanks of the group were expressed for their church, for their homes, for their friends, for the songs they could sing together, for the day and night, and for all the good times people could have together when they loved each other and loved God.

Song: "Come, Ye Thankful People, Come."

The primary and junior children met one Saturday after-

¹ *Worship Songs*, Vol. II, by Mrs. Crosby Adams.

noon at the church to make it pretty for Sunday. They gathered some wild flowers and green boughs and arranged them in low vases and bowls. One of their large pictures which showed children in happy play out-of-doors in summer was placed where all could see it. They had removed all trash and were ready to go home. Before leaving, the teacher called them together at the front and, tenderly touching the pretty green leaves and the flowers, led the children to think of other things which they had seen that day. The children truly thought about God when she said: "We're so glad, Heavenly Father, that we can see the beautiful things in thy world. We hope the things we have brought to our church will make all the people who come tomorrow think about thee. Amen."

A careful study of the above illustrations will reveal a variety of ways in which workers in small churches are trying to help children worship God. For many children the experience of worship in the Sunday school will be their only training in worship. Worshiping with others is a means of increasing children's understanding of God's relation to all his children. No phase of the teacher's work is more important than this.

MEANING OF WORSHIP

Consciousness of God in the world and a satisfying relation to him as revealed in Jesus are the birthright of

MEANING AND BASIS OF WORSHIP

every person. This satisfying relationship to God can give one a feeling of peace and security at all times. When everything which happens can be viewed in the light of a God-centered world and of his purpose and plan, one is able to feel calm and safe even when what is happening would otherwise disturb or annoy.

Worship, therefore, is a personal approach to God; it is speaking to God and listening to him speak; it is feeling in touch with God, realizing his presence, identifying one's self with God. Self and God are involved in every act of worship, but Christian ideas of God will not stop here. In true Christian worship one is conscious not only of God, but of Jesus, the supreme revelation of God, and of the whole spiritual universe.

Worship need not bring about self-pity nor self-abasement, but rather a real self-evaluation as we become conscious that God is with us; that he is able to help solve our problems. We therefore meet God and go forward in his spirit.

BASES OF WORSHIP

There seem to be two underlying bases which make worship possible. Human beings seem to have an inner urge toward fellowship with the divine; our nature seems to be able to reach out and take hold of that which is not human. But for this we could not commune with a God

whose very nature is spirit. Our spiritual nature, therefore, enables us to meet the infinite spirit of God and to feel at home in his presence. It is in this sense that man is made in the image of God.

The nature of God makes worship possible. The God of the Hebrews was worshiped from afar; but God, as revealed by Jesus, is very near, not far away. He is an understanding Father yearning for the answering love of his children; he is made glad when they commune with him; he is sorry, but not angry, when we do wrong; he is powerful, but not fierce; he provides for his children and gives us every good gift, but he is not a magician; he forgives, but he is not revengeful; he is just to all, but is not domineering; he is pleased when we try to please him, but is not overindulgent nor whimsical; he is a good, wise, loving Father to all his children.

This idea of God affects and determines one's prayer life, which is at the heart of worship. God is not to be overpersuaded nor to be bargained with. He expects everybody to do his best and to have a part in keeping or making the world a place where all people can live at their best in relation to each other and to him. He expects his children to be kind, to share, to love one another. He makes laws of harmony and beauty which when broken carry their own punishment.

The teacher of children needs to examine her own ideas

about God and to be sure that she is starting children on a path which will grow clearer and more satisfying and from which there need be no turning back.

WORSHIP NEEDS OF CHILDREN

Children do not come unaided into a satisfying relationship with God; moreover, it takes time and many experiences to bring about this relationship. Let us, therefore, examine some of the worship needs of children.

1. *A child needs a guide in his search for God.* Every parent and every teacher can become such a guide if, in childlike language and reverent sincerity, he shares with children his own association of God with the things which happen every day. Many have gazed upon the beauty of the out-of-doors and had no thought of the God of beauty; many have had opportunities for loving helpfulness, but have had no thought of pleasing God in this way; many have sung lustily without realizing that it was to God, and not the people around them, that they sang praises. Furthermore, a child needs help in becoming acquainted with God as revealed in the life and teachings of Jesus.

2. *A child needs to have his questions answered* in such a way that reverence for God is increased. We cannot tell him how God "puts up the moon," how God "makes all the babies," nor how God "makes the wind blow"; but our an-

swers to these and all his baffling questions can direct his thoughts in such a way that reverence, awe, and wonder take the place of the demand for accurate information.

3. *A child needs help in finding out what God likes* for his children to do rather than what God looks like.

4. *A child needs association with adults whose worship is real and joyous*, who do not mistake good singing and quietness for real worship.

5. *A child needs opportunity to associate God with everyday experiences*, not just with church and Sunday school. This means that parents have unending opportunities and that Sunday school teachers, too, can help to associate God with the happenings of the week.

6. *A child needs help in becoming familiar with materials which help him worship*. This will include verses, songs, pictures, stories, and sometimes memorized prayers.

A CHILD'S OWN EQUIPMENT FOR WORSHIP

We have seen above that our own spiritual nature can reach out and commune with God, since his nature, too, is spirit. In terms of little children this means that they seem to have a capacity for love, trust, reverence, and gratitude. Their very dependence upon some power stronger than self suggests the possibility of helping them to learn that God can always be depended upon. Their aspiration toward bigger and better things suggests an op-

portunity to help them aspire to be stronger and better children of their Heavenly Father. Juniors admire the skill of God the Creator, but can still find satisfaction in knowing that he is identical with God the loving Father.

The desire of children to please suggests an opportunity for helping them try to please God. The fact that they can learn early that their mother's love follows them when they are out of her sight can be used to help them know that God's love, too, follows them, and the unseen becomes very real.

The natural response of children to kindness, helpfulness, and sympathy can be used to help them know that God likes for them to be kind and helpful.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Examine one of the illustrations given at the beginning of this chapter under the following heads:

- a. What was the teacher's purpose?
- b. What material was used?
- c. How much time was probably used?
- d. What reason do you have for thinking that the children really worshiped?

2. What is the most beautiful thing that children see at your church?

3. What change can be made inside or outside the building to help the children of your church worship?

4. How can you account for some of the confused ideas the children have about God?

CHAPTER VI

TRAINING CHILDREN IN WORSHIP

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

1. What opportunity do the children of your church have for singing songs they understand and like?
2. Why is soft singing better for children than loud? Does this suggest a possibility for churches having no separate room for children?
3. To what objects or causes do the children of your church give? What can you do to help make their giving a real act of worship?
4. How may memorized prayers become a handicap rather than a help to true worship?

AIDS TO WORSHIP

THE qualities of children, considered in Chapter V, give confidence to the teacher who sets out to help them worship God. She knows that there are specific things she can do to help bring about this consciousness of living in a God-centered world, of one's own relation to God and to his family.

It is not easy to think about God when one is surrounded by disorder or loud, discordant noises. The teacher who sees the very definite relationship between these external conditions and the worship which she seeks to bring about, will go as far as possible in making the space to be used by children comfortable and orderly,

and in carrying on the work in such a way that loud, discordant music or other noises do not occur.

Since beauty makes one think of the God of law and beauty, the teacher will seek definitely to have some beautiful spot or object which the children can enjoy. Sometimes this will be a cut flower, a growing plant, a picture of children out-of-doors, a picture of a sunset, a picture which shows clouds, sunshine, or rain. She should not depend too much on pictures, however, for usually through the window the sky, the clouds, and the trees can be more definite reminders of the God who made them.

When one is loving and tender and helpful, he not only pleases God, but he is *like* God as revealed in Jesus. The teacher will therefore plan with the children things they can do for others. Through the use of pictures and stories she will widen their acquaintance with things they can do, and thus through their own experiences they can come to know God and Jesus.

Children will naturally want to say things to God if the teacher is seeking constantly to help them think about him in relation to all they do. Perhaps frequently she will say, "What would you like to say to God today?" And then she will gather into her own prayer the ideas which the children suggest. In this way they can feel that they have a part in the prayer although only the teacher may be speaking the words aloud. She will dis-

CHILDREN'S WORK IN THE CHURCH

cover songs appropriate in length and in meaning through which the children can express their own praise to God. Music is a very definite and real means of worship, and the teacher who works in the one-room church is stimulated to find times and occasions when the children may enjoy their songs without disturbing other people. Singing softly in their own corner, gathering around the piano before Sunday school or afterward on those days when there is no sermon, meeting at the church or at some home where there is a piano for occasional week-day meetings, or for regular meetings during vacation time are possible in many churches.

The offering and every opportunity for meeting a need, for making someone happy, or for expressing sympathy and kindness can be opportunities for helping the children think about God and worship him.

CHILDREN'S WORSHIP WHEN THE WHOLE SCHOOL MUST MEET TOGETHER

In the one-room churches even the smallest children will usually assemble with the others for the school worship service. What has been said above concerning the comfort, the orderliness, the beauty, the freedom from loud noises and discordant singing, relates to the worship of all ages and should be the concern of the adults responsible for this part of the plan of the school.

The leader of this service will keep the children in mind and will plan for at least a part of every service to be within their understanding. He will avoid calling upon the children for special numbers, but will plan for the whole school to participate in reading a passage of scripture or in singing a song which the children can enjoy. This is very much better than making the children's participation a feature for the entertainment of the adults.

If the classes are seated together in some definite order, their participation will be easier. The teachers of the children's groups can share with the entire school something which will be particularly helpful to the children and which will also help the adults to worship. Two such examples will be found in the illustrations at the beginning of Chapter V.

Juniors can usually take part in the entire service, but little children can have only a small part. For this reason, if it is at all possible, the younger children should remain in the space to be used for their class, or in good weather they may have their own simple worship service outside the church during the adult worship service.

CHILDREN'S WORSHIP WHEN SEPARATE ROOMS ARE AVAILABLE

Many churches in town and country communities have one or more rooms available for the use of children's

groups. When this is so, the children should have their own worship service except on those few occasions during the year when it seems desirable for the whole school to be together. If only one room is available, its size and the number of children will determine its use. Since the need for separate worship is greater for the younger children, the beginner group should be the first provided for in the separate room. The suggestions which have been made in Chapter II concerning the separation of beginners or the possibility of having a beginner-primary department provided that the number of children in this combined department is not too large to make good work possible, should be referred to at this point.

Wherever separate rooms are available, the leader will have more time and will necessarily plan more definitely for the use of a part of this time in leading children in worship. The arrangement of the room and the use of things brought in from the out-of-doors will help children to worship God. A bird's nest will make the children think of how wonderful it is that birds know how to make the kind of nest they need; a few seed pods will lead the children to think of the way plants can make seed so that there will be some more plants like them in the world; a lump of coal will cause them to think how wonderful it is that hidden away in the earth men have found something which God made and which can be used to

keep people warm and to cook their food; a smooth little rock will help them to see that even rocks, sand, clay, and rich earth are all a part of God's wonderful world. Such things, together with a suitable picture, a well chosen story or verse, the offering, carefully selected songs, and plans of the group for carrying on God's work may be used by the teacher in guiding children in worship. The wise leader will use not more than one of these suggestions at a time. The same material can be used over and over again, especially with little children. The above suggestions, therefore, should be enough to help the alert teacher plan for a whole year of worship services.

In planning for this separate worship service the leader will remember the following simple principles:

1. *That which is familiar helps one to worship.* The leader will not seek for the new and the strange, but will often use the most commonplace experiences and material to direct the children's thoughts to God, and she will make use of the same experience or material many times.

2. *Active participation makes worship more real to children.* The leader will use the objects which the children themselves bring in, will arrange for them to handle the object which is being used, will ask them to suggest things which they would like to say to God or do for him, will ask them to select the picture which they

would like to have in the front of the room to help them think about God, or will ask them how they could spend their money in the way which would help God most.

3. *The length of the worship service will vary with the age of the children.* In the case of little children there will be several moments of worship during the morning, whereas juniors in a separate room will have a more definitely planned worship service lasting fifteen or possibly twenty minutes.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR WORSHIP MATERIALS

1. *Prayer.* Much has been said in the preceding sections concerning the informality of prayer of little children and of ways in which they can participate in prayer. Parents and teachers might well discuss these things together in order that the prayer life of little children may from the beginning be real and sincere and free from empty words and forms. If prayer can be thought of as talking with God, then little children need only the suggestion concerning things which they would like to say to God to start them on a very real method of communing with God any time and anywhere.

There are a few prayer-songs which will help, especially if the teacher will sometimes say, "This song helps us think about God. As we sing it let us think how glad we are that we can sing thank you to God. The following refrain,

TRAINING CHILDREN IN WORSHIP

"Father, we thank Thee,
Father, we thank Thee,
Father in heaven,
We thank Thee,"

was used several times on one Sunday as the children named things for which they wanted to thank God.

There are a few Bible verses which can be used as prayers, especially for the older primaries and juniors. "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight" can be the real prayer of a junior only when he thoroughly understands and means what he says. Perhaps at the close of the class the teacher will say: "I know a verse which I should like for us to say as a closing prayer. You may say it with me if you like." Then with bowed heads she might repeat some verse which the whole class has learned. She should not be disturbed if they do not join in with her. Perhaps on some other Sunday she will try the same plan again, and thus gradually bring about a desire on the part of the group to join together in repeating a prayer verse.

Junior classes can work together in making their own class prayers. One group of juniors worked for several weeks composing a prayer, and when it was finally approved by the whole group typewritten copies were made and pasted in the back of their lesson book. For several Sundays they turned to this prayer and read it together at

the close, but soon they did not need to open their books, for all had learned it without any special effort to memorize it.

2. *Songs.* Every school should have at least one book containing good songs for children. Teachers should collect from the lesson material and from the periodicals which they receive songs which are suitable for the various age groups. In this way a song scrapbook can be made and added to as other songs are discovered. The fact that children enjoy the same songs over and over again makes it easy for music to become a vital part of their training in religion.

In the case of little children, many songs will be sung to them by the teacher just as a story is told. She need make no particular effort to teach them a song, but after they have heard it a few times perhaps she will say, "You may say it with me if you like," and, as in the case of the junior prayer mentioned above, the children will be able to sing a song that is not too long without ever having *practiced* it in the usual sense of the word.

Juniors are able to read, and therefore can discuss with the teacher the meaning of a song and follow the words as they learn to sing it together. Every effort should be made to select and use for juniors songs which they can understand and mean when they sing. For this reason songs that are too long, that contain symbolic ideas, that

refer to life as being tedious and tasteless, that contain sentiments of longing for death, do not express the ideas of juniors, and therefore can mean little to them in worshipping God. Songs which are a challenge to courage, as "I Would Be True," or which direct thoughts to the out-of-doors, as "This Is My Father's World," or which express the desire to dedicate one's self to Jesus, as "Just As I Am, Thine Own to Be," seems to be the birthright of every junior child, and a good teacher will leave no stone unturned to enrich the lives of boys and girls by acquaintance with these fine songs.

3. *Offering.* Children can worship God through their offering only when they give what is their own, when they desire to give, and when they understand the cause or object to which they are giving. In most cases the offerings of the children will go through the regular channels for giving, but even then the actual bills which are to be paid with their money could be spoken of in specific rather than general terms. For instance, if some of the money goes to pay the coal bill, the teachers can lead the group on several Sundays to talk about "ways in which we help to keep our church warm." When they actually put their coins in the little collection basket they can truly thank God that they can help keep the church warm so all the people can come to the church and worship him. It is very desirable that adults assume the responsibility for the

literature bills, in order that children may not feel that they have to pay for the paper which they take home. It is therefore the responsibility of the teachers to keep informed about the actual bills that are paid by the regular Sunday school offerings in order that those which children understand may be made real to them and that their giving may be a real act of worship.

It is particularly desirable that the offering of children be freed as often as possible from the usual channels in order that they may give to some special cause which they will choose. It may be to buy some flower seed for a sick friend; it may be to buy a picture to send to a smaller Sunday school near by; it may be to pay for the paper and the paste and cord which they use in making a scrapbook to send to a sick child; it may be to pay for the stamps they use to mail Christmas cards to the preacher and to others whom they desire to remember at Christmas time. All of these objects will require only a few cents. Each experience can be a real act of worship for the children if, for instance, the money used for the stamps is actually laid on the table and then if they thank God that they can give their money to buy the stamps to send a Christmas card to tell their pastor they love him.

It is the practice of many Sunday schools to use the offering every fourth Sunday for some definite missionary cause in which the whole church is engaged. In order

that this giving may be a real act of worship, the teacher of children should be thoroughly informed about the cause to which this money will be given. She will not need to wait until the fourth Sunday to talk to the children about this plan of the church, but through picture, story, and conversation will help them understand what it is they are doing when they put their money with all the other people's money on the fourth Sunday to do some big thing for God which nobody by himself could do.

4. *Pictures.* Too much cannot be said about pictures as a means of widening the horizon of children, acquainting them with children in other lands, suggesting helpful things which they can do, and directing their thoughts to God. Every good teacher collects pictures from various sources and uses them—not too many at a time but a few carefully selected—remembering that, as in the case of stories, children enjoy the same picture over and over again. A picture of little children sitting around the breakfast table with bowed heads; a picture of little children gazing at the sunset, or gathering flowers, or helping mother—all of these can be used at the appropriate time to enrich the lives of children and to guide them into a worship experience.

5. *Stories.* As in the case of pictures, stories have a definite place in work with children. The story found in the lesson material will often suggest worship. The teach-

er can often weave the child's own experiences into stories in a way that leads to worship.

THE TEACHER'S OWN DEVOTIONAL LIFE

The teacher will find that her own devotional life grows more real as she associates with children untainted by narrow-mindedness and prejudice, full of trust and lovingness. There can be no greater aid to an adult's worship than association with children in worship. That consciousness of the presence of God, which was discussed somewhat in length in Chapter V, is within the reach of every person. No one achieves this consciousness without practice, and this practice comes through every experience in which God is a recognized factor.

Those who touch the lives of children, therefore, are challenged to strengthen their own hold upon sources of spiritual power in order that children, too, may come to know the presence of Jesus in their lives. It is not so much what she says about God, but it is the way she says it; it is not so much what nature objects she brings in, but it is the tenderness and reverence with which she handles them; it is not so much what plan of helpfulness the children engage in, but it is the way in which God is recognized as an unseen member of their group. In all of these the teacher can grow more skilful. To one such teacher there came a reward. At the end of a

short story which had revealed more than she knew of the teacher's love for God, for all his children, and especially for the group before her, shy Jane drew very near and, touching the teacher's dress with a revealing tenderness, said: "I hope you'll never die."

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What evidence have you that adults sometimes enjoy singing children's songs? What children's songs do the adults of your church know? What occasion do they have for singing them?

2. If the whole school is to meet together for a Christmas or Thanksgiving service, what plans need be made in advance in order that the children's participation may be a real act of worship for them?

3. Of whom are adults thinking when they object to a separate room being used for the children's worship?

4. Suppose a separate space were available but was not being used for children's worship at your church. List the points you would make to convince the Board of Christian Education or other adults that it should be used for the children's worship.

5. List some questions which you would seek to answer about any song proposed for beginners; for primaries; for juniors.

6. Make a list of the things which a teacher of children can do to enrich her own devotional life.

7. Examine the lesson material you are using and list the songs which have occurred within the present year. How many of these do your children know?

CHAPTER VII

THE SCHOOL SESSION

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

1. Make an outline of the program for your Sunday school last Sunday, showing time of opening; time given to assembly and worship; what happened during this time; time allowed for the class sessions; what happened during this time in your own class; what happened after the class session; time and method of dismissal.

2. What are your chief difficulties in connection with your Sunday school class?

3. Why do you think the teacher should have a copy of the folder or book intended for the children as well as the teacher's book?

4. What use is made of the extra time at your church on the Sundays when there is no sermon? What other time is, or could be, used for carrying out plans of children's classes?

TIME SCHEDULE

EVERY good Sunday school has a definite time schedule and makes every effort to begin at the time appointed. The opening hour should not be changed to suit the convenience or whim of any one person. The closing may vary, since on the days when there will be no sermon more time can be used for practicing songs, for worship, and for class work. It is sometimes possible on these days for the parents and teachers to have a special meeting after Sunday school; for the workers to have a council meeting; or for the children to have an opportunity to

learn or enjoy songs and other activities for which too little time is allowed on other Sundays.

1. If the school has a sixty-minute session, the following time schedule may be found helpful:

a. School assembly and worship, twenty minutes. Teachers and pupils should be seated together by classes during this time, and some person stationed near the door to ask those who come late to sit quietly at the back in order that they may not disturb others who have assembled near the front. During this time the following items will often constitute the program:

(1) Opening song of praise and worship.

(2) Introduction of visitors or new members; mention of any other items concerning the happiness and well-being of the members of the school or of the community.

(3) Announcements. The secretary might give the report of attendance and offering for the preceding Sunday at this time.

(4) Worship service, planned by a committee with at least one representative from the children's classes, in order that some part of the worship service may be within their understanding.

(6) Dismissal to classes.

b. Class session, thirty minutes.

c. School reassembles, ten minutes. Classes given opportunity to share with entire group any plan in which the whole school would be interested; closing song of fellowship and praise; benediction.

2. If the school has a seventy-five-minute session, more time could be allowed for the opening assembly and worship, and possibly more time for the class session.

If a separate room is available for the beginners or for any group of children, it should be used for their worship as well as for the class session. In the case of little children there will be no clear line of demarcation between

that part of the hour spent in worship and in class work. The more detailed description of possible procedure with each age-group later in this chapter will help the teacher in planning how to use the time, whether it be thirty minutes in a corner of the church auditorium or one hour in a separate room.

THE TEACHER'S RELATION TO THE SCHOOL SESSION

1. *Teachers of children should make every effort to be at the church at least ten minutes before the hour set for opening.* In this way they can be free from the hurry attendant upon late arrival. The friendly greetings and confidences with early comers, the special opportunity for making friends with new or timid children, the opportunity for seeing that all things needed for that session are at hand in order to avoid delay and confusion, make this practice particularly desirable. This does not mean that the teacher herself will do everything that needs to be done for the class in advance; the children can sometimes help in arranging the space and material for the day.

2. *During the school assembly the boys and girls of her class will be of chief concern to every teacher.* She will see to it that the space where they sit is comfortable and convenient, if possible. The practice of sitting by classes during the assembly period helps to develop a group feeling, promotes consideration for others in moving to and

from classes, and provides a better opportunity for the boys and girls to take part in the worship service. Frequently the teacher will lead the worship service of the whole school or assist in making a part of it within the understanding of the children.

3. *At least one teacher of the children's classes should serve on the worship committee if the school worships together.* In this way it will be possible for the children to be considered in the plans; provision can be made for them to enjoy a story, picture, song, or scripture passage; and they can be protected from too frequent requests for "a special number by the children."

4. *When it seems desirable for the little children to remain in their own corner or out-of-doors during the school worship service, or when a separate room is available, the teacher will plan for the best use of this time.* The teacher will not trust to last-minute ideas as to the use of this time. If the beginners are to be out of doors in good weather during the adult worship service, the teacher will have in mind a definite plan for songs and conversation which will help the children to think about God and truly worship him. Whenever the children are in a separate place during the adult worship service, they will need help in being thoughtful of others, but need not be suppressed. Adults also need help in being considerate of the children

who may be trying to worship, but who cannot because of the unnecessarily loud singing or talking of adults.

In most small schools the juniors' best opportunity for worship is usually with the whole school. The teacher and the class seated together in their definite place can join in the reading and in the singing. There may be times when the juniors can take the lead in either or both of these parts of the worship service.

A PURPOSE FOR EACH SESSION

Every session of the school can develop or further Christian ideas, understandings, purposes, plans, and practices. It is a time for children to plan together, to worship together, to work together, and thus learn to live together. No longer do we think of it merely as a time to teach stories and verses which are to be remembered, nor to present "the lesson," nor to "impress a truth." The lesson material ¹ will be the teacher's chief guide in planning for each class session. She should be very sure that she is getting the material intended for her class, but will remember that it is to be used and not "taught" in the former sense of the word, and will continually supple-

¹ In studying this chapter the reader is requested to consult the lesson materials prepared by his denomination. When this textbook is used in a class or school, the instructor usually has a supply of denominational material for use in this connection. This adds greatly to the success of the class session.

ment it by pictures, songs, and other material which will help the children work, plan, worship, and live happily together.

Every good teacher will have a definite purpose for each session, such as: to further a happy feeling within the group; to carry forward their consciousness of God in his world, of his love and care; to further friendliness toward strangers; to awaken a desire to consider others first; to develop a love for the Church and a desire to have a part in its work; to help older boys and girls grow more friendly, more generous in their everyday relationships, and to be on the lookout for things which Jesus would do if he were here.

The reader may say that these are the underlying purposes of every good teacher. To this we agree; but *a definite purpose* for each session will help the teacher to relate her plans to the accomplishment of that purpose.

A PLAN FOR EACH SESSION

Unoccupied moments bring difficulties which the teacher finds it hard to overcome; therefore every minute should be accounted for when planning. The good teacher will have pretty definitely in mind just what she will try to accomplish during those minutes before Sunday school begins; she will recall the new pupil, the shy pupil, the sick pupil, or the absent pupil, with whose older brother or

sister, parent or neighbor, she will seek a moment's conference, if possible.

She will assemble all materials needed for that session and see to it that her plan for the day is not thwarted because she forgot to bring the picture or the vase or the offering basket which is needed.

In addition to the above evidences of careful preliminary planning, the teacher will study the lesson material carefully and will list in outline form the procedure she will follow during the class session. This might include the following:

1. How shall I begin? What can I do to help the group very quickly feel happy and comfortable? Have any pupils had a birthday this week? If so, how can I mention it in some way that will add to the happiness of all?

2. How can the offering be made a real act of worship? To what cause will the children's money go? Just what shall I say about it? Shall we pass the offering basket around the class, or shall I hold it and let each child bring up his own offering? Which did we do last Sunday? How did it work? Is there any particular child whose membership in the group would be strengthened if he had the privilege of passing the offering basket? Can I do this in such a way that others are not envious because of this privilege? What prayer, verse, or song will be ap-

propriate after the offering? Shall I say it, or shall we say, or sing it, together?

3. What plans already under way can be carried forward by the class? (Perhaps there is a pot of flowers that needs to be watered; perhaps a page needs to be made in the scrapbook; perhaps plans for the Christmas offering or Christmas service will need to be discussed; perhaps the way we sit together during the school assembly, or the songs we would like to share with the whole school next Sunday may be considered. Every class will probably have some matters of interest to all to be considered at this time.)

4. How can I recall our last lesson without "reviewing" it? (If there is a new pupil present, this can be accomplished by asking one child to tell the new pupil what was done or planned last Sunday. Perhaps a reference to the picture they used the Sunday before will help all to recall the things they said and planned to do. If the group is exactly the same as the Sunday before, perhaps the teacher will tell the class something she has done since last Sunday and give any of them who wish to do so an opportunity to tell how they carried out any part of the plan which had been agreed upon.)

5. If a new story is to be used or a new plan proposed, what will I say or do to relate it to the interests or needs of the group? Do I know the story well enough to tell it

without reference to the book? What use will be made of the pictures, if any? What will help the children get the most joy from the story and picture? (In the case of juniors, very definite plans will need to be made as to when and how the pupil's own Bible and lesson book will be used to best advantage during the class.)

6. How shall we close the class? How did we close it last Sunday? Is it well to close the same way every Sunday.

7. How shall the lesson folders be distributed to the children? Can I say anything to increase their pleasure in taking care of these papers? Do the parents of beginner and primary children understand that the story is to be enjoyed by them again during the week, if possible? Do the parents of juniors understand that they have a book containing the lessons for three months which must be cared for? What can I do to help parents understand this purpose of the lesson material?

8. Can I watch my time in such a way that we need not close in haste and confusion, but that the children will be ready to join their parents when the class session is over?

SUGGESTED PROCEDURE FOR EACH AGE-GROUP

1. *Nursery Group.*—The nursery department superintendent will take advantage of the Sunday session to

further her acquaintance with the parents of young children and with the children themselves, but these young children who come should remain with their mothers except when a separate room or space is made available for them. Even when there is a separate space very young children should still remain with their mothers.

If there is a separate place, the children from about two and a half to four years of age should be met by the nursery department superintendent and taken to their own space upon arrival at the church. The equipment and arrangement of this space has been described in Chapter II. Material such as mounted pictures, a box of blocks, and quiet toys which can be kept sanitary should be within reach of the children. The out-of-doors, whenever the weather makes it possible, is always to be preferred to a crowded indoor space. If there are many children, the nursery superintendent will need an assistant, especially if the group goes outside of the church. No lesson material in the usual sense of the word is needed for this group, but the leader should try to keep them happy and comfortable, to establish helpful association with each other through happy play, and to develop some idea of God's love and care. The little child's own experiences can frequently be told in story form by the leader. The following is an illustration of this kind of story:

CHILDREN'S WORK IN THE CHURCH

Bobby put on his hat and his coat, and was ready for his mother to take him to Sunday school. When he came to Sunday school he took the toy kitty and went with Mary and Susie out under their shade tree to play. And Mary said: "I want to play with kitty." Then Bobby said: "All right; he's your kitty, and he's my kitty, and he's our kitty." And they all played together under the big shade tree.

Perhaps during the morning the leader will sing quietly to the children some such simple lines as follows:

"We've had a happy time,
A happy time today;
We've had a happy time,
A happy time all day."

Again she might say: "Thank you, Heavenly Father, for the happy times we've had at our Sunday school." (For the above and other helpful material, see McCallum's *Nursery Class in the Church School*, the *Elementary Teacher*, and *Childhood Guidance in Christian Living*.)

2. *Beginner Class*.—Frequently a little child four or five years old is timid and shy because he is not accustomed to being away from home. When he comes to know his Sunday school teacher, and to know the way to the place where his class meets, and to feel sure that his mother or daddy is right where he can find him if he needs him, his happiness and contentment will be assured. The teacher's visits in the home and her presence at the Sunday school before the arrival of the little child will help to de-

velop his friendliness and his feeling of happiness at the church.

When the children go to their screened-off space for the class session, the teacher may carry on a friendly conversation as they take their places, calling attention to the way Johnny can move his chair without making any noise, or perhaps mentioning the fact that all the children are glad that Mary is here after being away so long.

No effort need be made to "teach" beginners the lesson, nor do they need to be questioned to see if they remember last Sunday's story or memory verse. They need frequent opportunity to move about, even in their own little corner. Sometimes when the children are in their places the teacher will sing softly "Good Morning to You," but she will not use this song every Sunday the year round. Sometimes she will vary this song by putting in the names of the different children, as

"Good morning to you,
Good morning to you,
Good morning, dear Charles,
Good morning to you."

Gradually the children will join in the singing, and some day they may sing this song to a mother who is visiting the class. The good teacher will learn a few simple songs to use in this way.

This informal time of conversation and singing may be

followed by the offering. The teacher may hold the basket and let each child come quietly and put in his money. This will give them an opportunity to move about as well as to make an offering. Then she will say a few words about what their offering is for, and perhaps will use one or two sentences of prayer. Some part of their money, if not all, should be used frequently to carry out some plan of their own. (See Chapter VI.)

If some child has had a birthday, the teacher may like to refer to it in some such way as this: "Frank was five years old last Tuesday. Stand up, Frank; let's see how tall you are. We all want to sing a birthday song to you." The birthday song may be the same as "Good Morning to You," with "Happy birthday" substituted for the words "Good morning."

If the central purpose of the lesson for the day is to help the children to think of God in connection with the beautiful things they see, perhaps the teacher will refer to some of the things they have seen during the week, or some of the things they can see right then—the sky, the clouds, the trees. Perhaps something which the teacher has brought to the class for that purpose will suggest many ideas to which the children will add. Perhaps then the teacher would say: "Would you like to draw a picture of something God has made?" The children can then sit on the floor and use the seats of their chairs (if no

table is available) as a hard surface on which to draw—provided, of course, adequate paper and crayons are available in advance and can be distributed without confusion. (Drawing need not necessarily be the plan for every Sunday.) When their drawings are finished, the children can again be seated and can share with each other the things they have drawn.

The teacher's help in interpreting their drawings will be needed. Perhaps one has made a few marks or circles with the blue pencil, and with the teacher's help he thinks of the blue sky; another may have made similar scrawls or marks with a green pencil, and together they think of all the green leaves and the green grass; another may have used the yellow crayon, and together they think of the yellow sunshine and maybe of a yellow flower; perhaps one has made brown marks, and together they think of the big brown trees that stand so strong and tall and make such nice places for birds and squirrels and such nice shade for children. This procedure is very much better than using any kind of pattern or suggesting that all draw the same thing. The teacher is not teaching *drawing*; and no matter what kind of marks the child makes, they will have meaning to him because they are his own.

This kind of experience could precede a story about how little children can help make the world beautiful, but it

would not be suitable to precede a story about helping mother, for instance.

If a new picture is to be used, the teacher could refer to it after the children have enjoyed their own "pictures." She could do this by saying, "I didn't draw a picture, but I brought one that I thought everybody would enjoy." This will help the children to be ready to put their own pictures aside to take home and to look at the picture which the teacher is going to talk about. Handling the picture will give them great joy, particularly if it is mounted on a stiff cardboard that will not bend. Another advantage of having the picture on stiff cardboard is that it can be propped up in a chair or even on the floor, if no table is available.

The teacher should be able to look into the faces of the children as she talks; therefore she will be prepared to *tell* the story, if one is to be used. A story has served its purpose if it has made the children think about God or about something they want to do for him or for someone else or about some way in which they can remember to be helpful at home. When it is over, there is seldom need to question them about the story, for the teacher is not trying to make them remember it.

Perhaps after the story the teacher will ask the children if there is anything they would like to say to God. If this plan has not been tried, the children will not respond

at first. Perhaps the teacher will say: "I'm just so glad all of us are here this morning and that we can see the sky and the sunshine from our window. I want to thank God for it." Then, closing her eyes, she may say: "Thank you, Heavenly Father, for our Sunday school and for all the children who come and for the mothers who help them get ready. Amen." Or perhaps she will say: "The picture you made and the story make me think of a verse in the Bible. I'll read it for you." Then she might open her Bible and read: "He hath made all things beautiful." Perhaps the children will want to crowd very close to *see* the verse. The plan of the day will determine whether a verse, worship, or further planning will follow the story. A story about what some children did for their church would naturally be followed by discussing "What we can do for our church." The teacher will then guide them into deciding upon something they really can do, such as "keep our corner clean," or "help make other children want to come," or "help make it pretty with flowers," and will help them carry out the plan.

She will plan in such a way that the children will have time to get their hats and wraps and to receive the lesson folder which will contain the story for the mothers to read or tell. She should also see to it that every child is given the privilege of taking home the "picture" which he drew.

3. *Primary Class.*—Primary children are apt to be a

little more at ease, but among them there may be the shy, timid little child who needs the understanding, friendly help of a teacher in order to be perfectly happy at Sunday school. Often they have been hurried off to Sunday school and do not arrive with any feeling of joy at being there. The same type of friendly conversation suggested above for beginners should be followed by the teacher before and at the beginning of the class session. If the children are noisy, perhaps the teacher's own low voice or her reference to some child who is trying to remember to be helpful will cause the others to fall into the spirit of helpfulness without having attention called to the noise. This is a simple skill which succeeds more often than it fails.

The greetings to new children and perhaps some simple comment about the child who has had a birthday or about the one whose absence is noted is a good way to begin. Perhaps several of the simple songs known and loved by the children can be enjoyed or a new song talked about and sung at this time.

The offering might very well follow these opening moments of fellowship. As in the beginner class, the plan for taking the offering will vary. Sometimes the basket can be passed from one to another around the group; sometimes one child will pass it around the group; or, again, the teacher may place the basket on a chair or table

near her, and each child may come forward and place his own offering in the basket. This last plan is possible only when the group is not too large; too much time would be consumed for children to do this in a crowded room. There need be no singing during the actual taking of the offering. Children cannot do more than one thing at a time with pleasure and satisfaction. If there is to be a song, it should precede or follow the offering. The teacher will then talk to the children about the cause to which their money goes. If it is a cause that is well understood, she may merely need to say: "This is the day our money goes for the orphanage. Aren't you glad we can help those children have a happy home?" A suitable prayer, a verse, or a song might conclude this part of the session.

A discussion of plans growing out of the lesson last Sunday might come at this time. Perhaps last Sunday each child agreed to try to find a picture of something he was thankful for. The teacher will have pictures of this kind to share with the others. Sharing and enjoying these pictures would be a happy time, after which the group might discuss "What shall we do with our pictures?" This discussion might lead them to decide either to paste them in a book, to paste all of them on one big cardboard to help remind them of things for which they were thankful, or perhaps some other plan will be made. The plan agreed upon may take several weeks to be car-

ried out; but if a suitable box is available for their pictures, some time on the following Sunday could be used to carry forward the plan.

Almost every primary class can have some plan of this kind under way all the time. Instead of pictures, it might be a discussion of "What can we do to help make our class space prettier?" or "What can we do to help in our school worship service next Sunday?" This might lead to the selection of one of their favorite songs which they would like to sing with the whole school. The entire length of the class session will determine how much time can be given, but nothing is more important than this planning with the group things they can do and making it possible for them to carry forward their plans week by week. The teacher of little children will see to it that they do not undertake too many things; certainly not more than one thing should be under way at one time. One plan carried out to completion is worth many times more than several plans begun but forgotten about or never finished.

Any new plan for the day would naturally follow the above. There will usually be a new story and picture to enjoy, but these are not to be "taught" in the sense that the teacher will try to question the children to find out what they remember. If a story is to be told, the teacher should know it well enough not to refer to her book. Her ability to look into the faces of the chil-

dren as she talks adds greatly to their enjoyment of stories.

It will be seen that worship may occur at several times during the class session with beginner and primary children. There may be a moment of worship at the very beginning when they pause to thank God because John is well again; there will usually be a moment of worship in connection with the offering. When the group is making or completing any new plan, the leader should help them think about God in connection with it in order that they may learn to think of him in connection with all their plans and experiences. For instance, if pictures have been brought which show things for which the children are thankful, at the close of the enjoyment of the picture the teacher could say: "Shall we thank God right now for all these things and the other things we have thought about?" Then with bowed heads she might say: "Thank you, Heavenly Father, for all the things the pictures made us think about and for all the other things which are in thy world and which we enjoy every day. Amen." Perhaps if they have selected a song which they will sing in the worship service next Sunday, the teacher will say: "Shall we ask God to help us sing it in such a way that the people will not think about us but will think about God?" Then she might say: "Heavenly Father, we love to sing our songs together. They help us to think about thee.

We hope when we sing them next Sunday they will help all the people think about thee, too. Amen."

The teacher will see to it that at the close of the session there is time for every child to get his hat and wrap and to receive the lesson folder for that day. Perhaps she will say something about ways in which he can enjoy or share his paper during the week.

4. *Junior Class.*—Juniors are very apt to rush hurriedly to their places and probably contend over choice seats. Sometimes with the little children the choice seat is the one next to the teacher, but with juniors the reverse is too often the case. Perhaps in the very beginning the teacher can ask the class to help her plan a way by which they could come together quickly and quietly. One suggestion from a member of the group will be worth ten suggestions from the teacher herself. A suggestion made by a member of the group and agreed to by all can become a sort of standard which the class itself tries to remember. Perhaps she will take occasion to comment on the orderly manner in which they take their places when they do come together without noise. She will also watch for chances to enlist the co-operation of the most active ones in something that will help the class. For instance, she may ask one of the larger boys to help her arrange the blackboard and table, and this may offer a chance for her to say to

him quietly that she asked him because she thought he could do it without disturbing anyone.

If juniors have under way some plan in which they are interested, much of their activity can be directed to carrying forward their plan rather than to aimless interference with each other, which adds to the apparent disorder of the group and decreases their interest in the class. The teacher will, therefore, plan definitely to enlist their interest in something worth while which they really want to do. Occasional week-day meetings will add much to a feeling of fellowship between teacher and group, as well as give them an opportunity for doing many things which they can only talk about on Sunday.

After the opening moments of fellowship, some reference to the cause for which the offering is to be directed and a brief prayer may follow. The teacher may find it desirable to spend some time in discussing plans which grew out of last Sunday's lesson and reporting on progress that has been made. It may be that the lessons are about the church and the group has become interested in finding out more about their own church. One may have agreed last Sunday to find out something from the oldest member of the church about the building of the church; another may have agreed to find out from the pastor something about the former pastors; another may have agreed to find out from the treasurer how much it costs to

pay the bills of the church each month. Their report upon all these things they had agreed to do, with some contribution, of course, from the teacher as a member of the group, may lead them to ask other questions which they will try to find out during the coming week.

If the lessons are about people in other lands, the group may decide to make a "Book of the Nations." They will want to talk about what they have read or found during the week and to make further plans.

It will not be the purpose of the teacher to question the children as to how much they have studied their lesson, but rather to help them find pleasure in using their books during the class session and during the week also. Occasional passages in her own book can be shared with them.

The use of their own Bibles is a very important part of the class work of juniors. It is frequently desirable to spend some time in studying together a passage which the class has agreed to memorize. It is seldom valuable for children to memorize a passage before it has been studied together in class. Perhaps all will open their Bibles and read together a passage or follow it while the teacher reads it. She will help them by supplying details or explaining the meaning. Sometimes a picture or story helps.

This plan might be used in studying the Twenty-third Psalm. After they have read it together, perhaps the teacher will say: "Close your eyes and tell me what pic-

tures this verse makes you see." Or she might let each pupil tell in turn what the verses "make him see." Then they might discuss together the verses they like best and why. Perhaps they would then like to read the whole passage straight through together, thinking about its meaning. All this will occur before the teacher has said one word about memorizing it. It will often happen that many in the group will know it after this careful study. Perhaps they will then agree to see how much of it they can repeat next Sunday without referring to their book. On the following Sunday they might all open their Bibles for quick reference when needed, but see how far they can go before referring to the Book. The one who looks at it before the first verse is over need not be made to feel conspicuous, nor need the one who can repeat it from beginning to end be made to feel particularly "smart." It becomes an enterprise in which all are engaged and one which has added meaning if the passage is to be used by the juniors in a worship service. There seems to be no reason for urging juniors to memorize passages just for the sake of memorizing them; but if they are memorizing them for a purpose, interest and meaning are added.

Some junior classes keep a class book of "Verses and Poems We Know and Like," to which they add and from which they make selection for the school worship service or for special occasions. The methods of some teachers

have seemed to result in a dislike for the Bible and in a feeling that "there's nothing in it that a fellow can understand." In all the ways used to increase their acquaintance and interest in the Bible the teacher should remember that her desire is to open rather than to close this book to them.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Check the lesson material meant for your class to see if every item you should have is available.

2. What central idea seems to tie together the lessons which you are using at the present time?

3. Consult the table of contents of your lesson material for the present quarter and see into how many groups or units the lessons seem to fall.

4. Read the lesson material for one quarter and list all material or suggested activities which seem to contain missionary ideas.

5. What interests, problems, or needs of your class will you take into consideration when you plan for your next class session?

6. Read again the description of a class session corresponding to the class you teach. Make what you think might have been the teacher's outline for the day.

7. Read carefully all the material (in teacher's and pupil's book) for next Sunday. In what respect does it differ from the class session described in this chapter?

8. Make an outline of your plan for next Sunday, including the following items:

a. What specific idea, purpose, or practice do you hope the session will further or develop in the lives of the boys and girls?

b. How will you start the class session?

c. How will you plan to make the offering a real act of worship?

THE SCHOOL SESSION

- d.* What plan or interest already under way will you need to help carry forward?
- e.* How will you use verses, songs, pictures, or story?
- f.* How will you close the session?
- g.* What particular needs of individual pupils will you have in mind as you help them plan for the next week?

CHAPTER VIII

THE CHILDREN AND THE CHURCH

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

1. In what ways can the pastor recognize the presence of children in the congregation during the regular church hour? In what part of the service can they participate with understanding?

2. Why is it particularly desirable to have children received into the church at a time when no adults are received?

WHEN Jesus set a little child in the midst of the perplexed adults, he said: "Of such is the kingdom." We seem to be clearly justified in our interpretation of his meaning when we say our task is to keep children from turning away from the path of righteousness so that they may never be conscious of a time when they were not God's children.

There are adults who have wandered away from the path of righteousness, but who somehow have been touched by the spirit of God, have turned away from an empty life, and have gone forward with a strengthened purpose to live as God's children. There are those in whose judgment we have confidence who say that such an adult is then in the same relation to the Kingdom of God that a child has always been. "Of such is the kingdom."

An adult friend, on answering the question, "Have you been converted?" said: "I'm sorry to say I have been."

At first this perplexed us ; then we realized that this blessed old man regretted the fact that he had wandered so far from God that a "turning about" became necessary in his life. In other words, admitting conversion was also admitting that he had wandered afar, which in his opinion seemed to have been unnecessary.

There are for all of us high moments of spiritual ecstasy when we seem to feel God very near and when we desire to dedicate our lives anew to him ; but these moments should be many, and not one. Perhaps there will be one that stands out above all others in its effect upon our after life. This should be treasured, but no one would condemn another who has not had a similar experience.

Children need help in developing a sense of security and certainty that they are God's children. There seems to be no need for making them feel that they are outside of the Kingdom of God and that they must take some stand which transports them from darkness into light. We like to recall the oft-quoted illustration of the eight-year-old to whom the familiar adult appeal, "Come to Jesus," was being made. She replied : "Why, I've never left him."

Just as we want to help children from the very beginning feel at home in the presence of God, so we want them to feel at home both at the church building and also at home in the plans and activities of the church organization which

are within their understanding. Reference has been made to the provision for their physical comfort, which will not only help them feel at home, but will add to their sense of pride and possession in the local church building. In the succeeding paragraphs more definite suggestions will be made concerning ways in which they can be helped to feel that they are a part of the church program and plan.

THE PASTOR AND THE CHILDREN

We look to the pastor to be the leader in helping parents and other adults in the congregation to aid the younger members of the group whose progress along the way of life must be with childlike steps and through childlike experiences.

1. *The understanding pastor will recognize the fact that he cannot do all that needs to be done* in organizing, directing, and carrying out the various phases of work for children, young people, and adults in even the smallest church. He will, therefore, recognize every teacher as a pastor's assistant in working with children to develop these Christian ideas, understandings, attitudes, purposes, and practices about which the church is concerned. Knowing that the needs of children are different from those of adults, he will encourage workers in his congregation to prepare definitely for this important part of the work in the local church.

The pastor will realize that the usual church service cannot meet every need of little children ; therefore he will plan with the workers ways in which at some other time or place the children may have as fine an opportunity for fellowship and worship as the adults have at the eleven-o'clock service.

Although the church service can mean very little to the youngest children, the pastor will remember the children of approximately junior ages who are in the congregation and occasionally use a story or an illustration which will have particular meaning to them. By using hymns and scripture readings especially meaningful to juniors, and sometimes those which they have learned in the Sunday school, he will enable them to have some part in the church service without planning for a special number. Perhaps he will have opportunity to refer with appreciation to something the children have done for the church or some plan which they have under way, thus recognizing them as having a definite part in the ongoing work of the church.

2. The wise pastor seeks to know the children of his congregation. If he can know them by name, can have fellowship with them as he visits their homes, at the public school, or on other occasions where he can meet the children, he can help to develop between himself and them a wholesome, friendly relation. In seeking this fellowship,

however, he will avoid interrupting the classes on Sunday morning in order to shake hands with the children and the teacher. This might be for him the most convenient time, but by so doing he will shorten the teacher's already too limited time for furthering that happy feeling which will enable the group to carry forward their plans.

3. *The wise pastor will notice every effort of the children to show friendliness to him.* Perhaps the primary class will make a waste-paper basket for his Christmas present; or the beginners might present him with a calendar; or perhaps the juniors will send him a Christmas card which they have made. It takes time, of course, to acknowledge or to express appreciation of these acts which show friendliness on their part, but the result in the lives of the children, both in love for that particular pastor and in love for that for which he stands, will be more than worth the time it takes.

Not only their gifts to him, but their efforts to take care of their space at the church, their material, or their room, if they have one, might be stimulated by some simple word of recognition or appreciation. Perhaps the children's classes will take turns in providing flowers for the pulpit during the season when flowers are plentiful. It takes but a moment to recognize this thoughtfulness on their part, but it goes farther than the pastor himself knows in

building up attitudes and relationships which become for the children stable influences.

4. *Sometimes it is possible for the pastor to keep in such close touch with the plans of the children's classes that he can make a real contribution to their work.* By this we do not mean that he is in a position to "take charge" of a children's class on Sunday morning. This is seldom wise. But if the juniors are finding out how we got our Bible or finding out all they can about our church; or if the primary children are finding out all they can about friends in other lands; or if the beginners are learning more about ways God works in the world—a note, a card, a picture, a nature object from the pastor or even some reference to the work they have been doing, will increase their interest, advance friendliness, and aid the teacher in accomplishing a definite purpose.

The pastor will remember that children are children and not "little folks." He will talk to them as real boys and girls. In every plan undertaken by the church, no matter how comprehensive—whether it be building, remodeling, painting, or whether it be paying the pastor's own salary or raising a missionary offering—he will lead the adults in considering the part which the children may have. Their participation in these things will be a most important means of helping them feel that they are a part of the local church organization and plan. He will confer with

the teachers of children concerning the things which the children can do, and perhaps confer with the children themselves concerning the part which they would like to have in some big responsibility undertaken by the whole church.

The pastor who must touch several communities will, of course, have closest contact with those children in the community where he lives, but he will remember that a definite part of his service in the other community is his ministry to the children. Herein lies one of his most satisfying and fruitful fields of service for the Kingdom of God.

THE TEACHER'S PART

The following will suggest ways in which the teacher can help the children grow in friendliness for the pastor and in love for the church.

1. *On every occasion she can help them understand that "the pastor is our friend and we are his friends."* Perhaps sometimes they will discuss together the question, "How can we let him know that we want him to help?" This may lead to a suggestion on the part of the children of something they can do to show that they are his friends, such as a gift to him, or perhaps it might be to find out something they know he wants done at the church and to do it as a surprise for him.

2. *Arrangements can sometimes be made in advance for*

the pastor to visit a class on Sunday morning. When he does so, he need not be asked to "take charge," but should be treated as an interested member of the group. Perhaps the children will tell him some things they have been doing and also some things they are planning to do. His advice on certain matters might be sought. The younger ones might share with him some pictures, stories, or songs which they love. It is very important that the teacher talk with the pastor in advance, in order that he may understand and co-operate in the plan which will be best for the children.

3. *The teacher's own attitude toward the church will help the children learn to love it.* The feeling that this is our church, that we can help take care of it, will lead to a discussion similar to that mentioned above in which each group of children decide something they can do for it. All can help keep it clean, can make it pretty, can bring flowers, can put away their things, can invite friends. At a few places flowers or shrubs could be planted by the older groups, and responsibility for the care of certain parts of the grounds can be assumed.

THE PARENT'S PART IN DEVELOPING THE RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARD PASTOR AND CHURCH

As in all other relationships, no adult has greater opportunity than the parents. Remembering that children

are learning when adults do not realize it, wise parents will refrain from any remark or action which may lead the children to question their loyalty to the church and its pastor. The following more specific suggestions may be helpful:

1. *Discover in the pastor those qualities most worthy of appreciation and discuss only those.* For the sake of children, wise parents will refrain from comparisons or remarks which would at any time lead children to question their loyalty to the pastor and to the church.

2. *Have the pastor as a guest in the home.* It is not always easy to help the children to feel that they are natural members of the family group when guests are present. Too often the tendency is either to ignore them entirely or to go to the other extreme and make them the center of attention. Neither of these attitudes is helpful. If the pastor would enjoy, there is no reason why they should not share them with him, but they should not monopolize his time or attention. The fine art of maintaining this family relationship with a guest is worthy of special consideration.

3. *Help children plan ways in which they can make the pastor's stay pleasant.* Perhaps they will save flower seed, gather a basket of nuts or fruit or select some other gift

which will represent real thought and effort on their part and which the pastor will enjoy.

4. *Take pride in the appearance of the church, and help children plan things which they can do for the church.* If parents are to make an offering to some cause which is within the understanding of the children, the amount to be given and the cause to which it is given could be discussed with the family together. Some families are able to handle their resources, be they meager or abundant, in such a way that the children feel that they have a part in the gifts as well as the responsibilities of the family.

Together the family may plan what they can do for the church. The suggestions of the children may be considered along with the others, and every effort on their part to help can be magnified and encouraged. The practice on the part of the family of regular, systematic giving and attendance, and their co-operation in helping the children make and save money for their own offering, are vital factors in developing on the part of the child a desire to bear his part of the responsibility of the church.

It is not always easy for the children to earn the money which they give. But if the money cannot be earned, and if an allowance for those of junior age does not seem practicable, parents can at least make it possible for each child to have in his possession throughout one whole week

the offering which he is to make the following Sunday. This practice gives him the feeling of satisfaction that his money for next Sunday is all ready, heightens his feeling of possession, and also increases his feeling of giving that which is his own.

5. *Parents will remember that children are young Christians*; that they do not need the evangelistic message intended for adults. They will co-operate with the teachers and pastor in furthering the normal growth of children in Christian living. When interest is expressed in joining the church, parents will be ready to explain its meaning and to co-operate in making this a high occasion in their Christian growth.

JOINING THE CHURCH

Regardless of their age, children will have many experiences which help them realize that people join the church. They will see others received into the church; they will hear the pastor announce the names of people who have joined the church; they may sometimes hear the pastor say how many members the church has; they will hear the pastor say: "If there is anyone here who would like to join the church, please come forward." It is, therefore, perfectly natural that they themselves will want to know what it means to join the church. We do not presume to give any expression as to the time or the age when this

step can normally be taken. If it were the desire of the teacher of children even younger than six, they could be led to join the church simply because they would follow the suggestion of any person whom they loved. All will readily agree that this practice would not be wise; but a few years later—certainly by the junior age—children can understand very definitely what joining the church means. It is the part of Christian parents, teacher, and pastor to help them understand and to help them want to take the stand which this act typifies.

While this desire may be a natural result of proper training, it should not be taken for granted. The teacher of juniors has a definite responsibility here. She will frequently have opportunity to discuss with them the work of the church, meaning possibly the denomination; again, she will speak of the work of the church, meaning the local congregation; again, she will use the word "church," referring to the building itself. This will not result in confusion, for juniors can readily understand that the word "church" has several meanings.

Juniors like to take sides and to follow a leader. Because of their increasing ability for self-direction, they are able to decide the kind of leader whom they will follow and to formulate a kind of standard for their own living. With proper guidance they will reverently and wholeheartedly accept Jesus as their leader and his way of liv-

ing as the standard for their own lives, and will signify this decision by joining the church. Care should be taken that no line of demarcation arises in the children's mind between those who join the church and those who do not. If the whole class of juniors discusses what it means to follow Jesus, those who have not joined need not be made to feel that they have less obligation than those who do.

PREPARATION OF CHILDREN FOR CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

In order that joining the church may not be a mere form, but that it may be accompanied by an intelligent desire on the part of the child and also accompanied by deep and earnest spiritual purpose and feeling, special preparation must be made for the occasion. The age of the child and the entire situation will naturally determine what this preparation should be, but the following points seem to be desirable:

1. *The confidence and approval of parents should be secured.* Many times the children themselves discuss their desire with their parents first of all. This will invariably happen if the open door of confidence has been maintained in the home. The parents should be able to enter into the child's feeling and to advise him wisely in terms which he can understand.

2. *The teacher should help.* Perhaps the desire to join the church will grow out of a discussion of the church and its work by the teacher with her class. She should have in advance the information concerning those of the group who are members of the church and those who are not, and will be careful that in her discussion she does not draw a line of distinction between them.

Talking to children about joining the church need not cause a teacher to feel queer or strange or inadequate. Their growth in spiritual things is her main objective. She should be able to discuss with the children, in terms which they can understand, the joy which people all down through the ages have had in letting the whole world know that Jesus is the Lord of their lives and in belonging to a church that is trying to carry on God's work in the world in an organized way.

3. *The pastor has a definite part.* In fact, these adults—parents, teacher, pastor—should work in closest co-operation, and each should know what the other has said to the child. It is sometimes desirable for the pastor to meet the children at some special time, in order that they may know and understand him better, and that he may help them feel more deeply about the public declaration which they are about to make before the church. As he talks with them, he will always avoid the technical, adult phrases. Perhaps he will talk to them about the

meaning of God's family; the purpose of a church organization; something about the denomination; something about how the sacrament is observed by all Christians, because it helps them remember how very much Jesus loved his disciples and how very much he loved all people who should believe on him even after he had died; about how he believed that love was the greatest thing in the world; and that we, too, as we think of him and the kingdom of love which still is struggling to grow in the world, believe that love is the basis for right thinking and feeling and acting. He will help them understand that when a person joins the church he agrees to do his part in carrying on the work which the church will undertake. This will mean giving and helping in every way that he can. To many children the church is a sort of enlarged family in which they already have membership, and joining the church is a public declaration of an allegiance that already exists.

There seems to be no reason why they should make a particular study of any particular doctrine or creed of the church at this time. The full meaning of all the phrases is beyond the understanding of many adults, and much more beyond the understanding of children. Introducing them to adult ritual and forms will add to their sense of mystery and uneasiness at this time rather than to their sense of joy and security.

THE CHILDREN AND THE CHURCH

THE RECEPTION OF CHILDREN INTO THE CHURCH

The reception of children into the church can be made to mean very much more to them if only children are received at that time. This may not always be possible; but whenever it is, the service should be simple but impressive and beautiful. The special ritual for receiving children into the church should be used. The pastor will recognize the co-operation of other adults—in most cases the parents and teachers—who have helped children want to join the church. It is sometimes desirable for the parents and teachers to stand with the children around the chancel, although this may not in all cases be practicable.

OTHER CHILDREN OF THE COMMUNITY

It will be evident from the preceding discussions that evangelism for boys and girls becomes a continuous process and is of dominant concern to teachers the year round. The practice of having a particular time of the year when this emphasis is lifted to the fore does not indicate that it receives attention only at that time.

Many churches have a definite plan for inviting to their services and activities persons not identified with some other church, or who are not within reach of a church organization of their own denomination. Children may have a very definite part in this. Through their contacts

CHILDREN'S WORK IN THE CHURCH

with other children in the public school they will be able to bring to the teacher and to the pastor information that will lead to the discovery of opportunity for friendliness and the extension of fellowship.

It is sometimes possible for the pastor and a selected group of workers in the local church to make a map of the surrounding territory and to locate all families not in touch with some other church. This kind of study can be entered into by all the churches represented in the community, in order that together they may seek to bring into their plans the last person within reach of them. Certainly *the last child* should be the objective of the Christian forces in any community. The co-operation of public school teachers is also valuable in this kind of service, for schools and churches represent the most vital constructive agencies, and often they can do together what neither of them alone could undertake.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. How many children under twelve years of age are members of your church? How many have joined within the last year? What effort was made by parents, teachers, or pastors to help the children understand what they were doing?
2. What principles of life and religion are violated when an evangelist holding a special service for children delivers to them the message of salvation for wrecked or broken lives?
3. In what ways can even the very little children be made to feel that they are a part of the local church organization?

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4. Outline the approach you would make to a junior boy from a non-Christian home in trying to interest him in joining the church. What would be the difference in procedure with a boy from a Christian home who has grown up in a Sunday school with understanding teachers?

5. What can you do to help other adults of your church to a better understanding of what seems to have been Jesus' attitude toward children?

CHAPTER IX

THE CHURCH AND THE HOME

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

1. What have you done, or what can you do, to convince the parents of your pupils that you are more deeply concerned about helping the children than you are about teaching any particular printed material?

2. Has your class engaged in any plan the success of which depended upon the consent, approval, and co-operation of the parents? How did you secure this co-operation?

3. Why is it desirable to suggest that boys and girls talk over proposed plans with their parents?

4. How many different ways and occasions do you have for increasing your acquaintance with the children outside of the actual Sunday school hour? To what extent have you used these opportunities?

PARENTS AND TEACHERS

No other influence can entirely take the place of an understanding fellowship of children and parents in a Christian home. No other agency can take the place of the church in providing fellowship, study, and worship for children in groups approximately the same age. It becomes for the home a first-aid, an ally, but never a substitute.

Parents reveal a variety of attitudes toward the church. Some, while recognizing the primacy of their own opportunity and responsibility, welcome the friendly interest

of Christian teachers and co-operate in formulating plans for the children; others do not realize the significance of early training and home experiences, but seem willing to turn over to the church the entire responsibility for the training of their children. Still others are wholly unprepared to provide the training which their children need, and seem wholly indifferent to the opportunities for training at the church.

There exists also among teachers a variety of attitudes toward the parents and homes from which their pupils come. The best of them realize how meager is their contact with children and seek every opportunity to help parents understand the plans which the church is making for the children; other seemingly earnest and sincere teachers make no effort whatever to let the parents know that they are trying definitely to help the boys and girls in their classes.

If the largest benefits to the child are to be realized, these two groups of adults—parents and teacher—need to plan and work together. A child is much more easily influenced by a teacher who is recognized by the family as an understanding friend. Many of the plans made by the church for the children can succeed only if the co-operation of parents is secured.

PLANS DEPENDENT UPON CO-OPERATION OF PARENTS

The following indicate some of the plans of the church which can succeed only when parents understand and co-operate:

1. *The Sunday school urges prompt attendance.* It is valuable for children to form the habit of prompt and regular attendance at the Sunday school, but regular attendance is impossible without the co-operation of parents. A father who makes Sunday trips to confer with a neighbor or to engage help for the work on the farm for the next week, for example, may not be indifferent, but he may fail to understand the importance to his children of the regular and prompt attendance which his plans seem to make impossible.

2. *The Sunday school urges regularity in offerings.* In order that a child's offering may be an act of worship, it is very desirable that he give that which is his own and not merely transfer a coin from a parent's hand to the offering basket. In some homes it has been found practicable to provide children with a small allowance which increases with the age of the child. When this plan does not seem practicable, it is possible to help children make or save the money which is to be their offering. Every effort can be made to refrain from handing a child a coin at the last minute before he enters the church on Sunday.

Teachers, on the other hand, should realize that a child's

gifts need not be limited to an offering of money. An offering of flowers, a book, or a toy which is his own and which can be given to some other child should be recognized as an offering pleasing to God just as definitely as the offering of money. His acts of loving helpfulness may be just as real a basis for worship as a money offering.

3. *The Sunday school urges wise use of lesson folders, story papers, and Bibles.* The small child who receives a lesson folder is dependent entirely upon his parents or an older brother or sister to read or tell him the story. He is not expected to study a lesson in the sense that older boys and girls do. Reading the story again in the home is a means of adding joy and assisting him in recalling the happy time or the plan which was made at Sunday school.

Parents can encourage children to take care of their lesson folders and make them into storybooks. If the child should become ill, or if another child comes to visit him, they will be a source of pleasure; if kept for a month or for three months, they may be given to some other child who does not attend Sunday school. This added enjoyment of the Sunday school lesson folder for little children is dependent entirely upon the interest and aid of parents.

Junior boys and girls receive a lesson book which they are expected to use for a period of three months. The care and wise use of this quarterly will be practiced more

widely if each boy and girl has in his home a special place for his Sunday school book and if parents co-operate in reminding him to take care of it and to take it with him each Sunday.

In addition to the lesson book, some Sunday schools provide a story paper for boys and girls who are old enough to read. The enjoyment and use of these story papers can be furthered by understanding parents.

Junior boys and girls also need Bibles for their Sunday school work. A Bible for a birthday or Christmas gift, and some encouragement to use it in connection with his Sunday school work, will help him learn to understand and appreciate it. Perhaps the junior's own Bible will be the one from which the family will read together on many occasions.

4. *The Sunday school sometimes makes extra plans for children.*

a. An extra offering is sometimes requested. Misunderstanding on the part of children is usually avoided if parents understand the purpose and plan of this extra offering.

b. Extra material is sometimes requested. Teachers frequently ask children to try to find a certain type of picture needed for a particular purpose. Sometimes in vacation schools children are asked to bring empty boxes, tools, short pieces of lumber, scraps of cloth, old magazines

from their homes. Such requests should be made only after every effort has been made to help parents understand the purpose and plan.

c. Extra meetings are sometimes planned. As in the case of attendance upon Sunday school, the attendance of children upon any extra meeting is dependent upon the co-operation of their parents. In some cases transportation is a problem not easily met. An understanding between parents and teachers will lead the teachers, on the one hand, to make plans which can best be carried out by parents, and will enable parents, on the other, to make every effort to make possible the attendance of their children at the extra meetings. Transportation to and from vacation schools can sometimes be solved by the co-operation of several parents and occasionally by the use of a school bus that is not in use during the vacation time.

HOME EXPERIENCES OF CHILDREN

The good teacher is more concerned about helping boys and girls than she is about teaching any particular printed lesson material; her help for them is much more vital if she not only knows the face and name of each, but if she knows something about their home life and experiences of the week.

1. *Other members of the family.* The teacher will certainly want to have the following information about each

child: Is he an only child? Is he the eldest? The youngest? Do his grandparents live in the home? Are both parents living? Does the family maintain regular habits of work? What members of the family are at work? Does his father have regular employment? Do they own their own home? Many of the problems and needs of little children are traceable very definitely to the home situation in which they live.

2. *Home responsibilities of children.* Does the child assist in the family duties? Is he left to care for a younger member of the family? Is he left in the care of an older brother or sister? Does he have opportunity to share in the work of the home without being overtaxed?

3. *Contacts with pets.* Does he live on a farm? Does he have a pet of his own? Does he have any responsibility for the care of his own pets or for the farm animals?

4. *Contacts with books and pictures.* Does he have access to any books suited to a child his age? If the teacher should ask him to bring a picture of any particular kind, what source would be available in his home for finding such a picture? What person in the home would be most interested in helping him find it? Is there a person in the home who reads or tells him stories? If a library is available, does the home enjoy its privileges?

5. *Source of offerings.* How is his Sunday school offering provided?

6. *Provision for attendance upon Sunday school and extra meetings.* Does the whole family come to Sunday school? Will other plans of parents necessitate his absence? If an extra meeting is planned, will younger brothers and sisters want to attend also?

7. *Time and space available for play.* Does he have a suitable place for outdoor play? Could he share his play space, his materials, his books, his pets, and other home joys with his Sunday school friends? Would it be possible and desirable to plan a meeting of the Sunday school class at his home? Could this be done without imposing extra work upon his parents?

8. *Happenings of the week.* If there has been a new baby, a new cat, a new pig, a little child is apt to come to Sunday school anxious to share the interesting news with his teacher. The understanding teacher will always have time to listen, and she rises very much in the opinion of children if she sometimes knows about these things without being told.

DESIRABLE VIEWPOINT AND PURPOSE

Parents and teachers who are primarily concerned about children will draw very close together in friendly understanding and helpfulness, and will develop certain common viewpoints.

1. *Both are primarily interested in helping children de-*

velop those ideas, understandings, attitudes, and practices made so real and winsome in the life of Jesus. A child's life through the week is reflected in his life on Sunday; his fellowship with his teacher and other children on Sunday is effective only when it lifts his through-the-week living to a higher plane.

2. *Both realize that character cannot be developed through external authority.* The rules consisting of "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not" too often ignore the God-given qualities of the child with which the adult should work so that the child himself will come more and more to the point where he can make his own right decisions.

3. *Both can emphasize joyous family fellowship.* The parent will seek to make it a practice of the home; the teacher, through story, picture, song, and discussion, will help to make happy membership in the family group a joyous experience.

4. *Both can emphasize and encourage joyous membership in the Sunday school group.* Here the teacher has primary responsibility and knows that a happy feeling within the group is essential to any successful work. Parents, on the other hand, by providing an opportunity for the children to tell about the plans of their class and by co-operating in carrying out those plans, will help the child love the Sunday school and what it stands for.

5. *Each will seek to be worthy of the respect and confidence of the other and of children.*

MORE SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHERS

1. *The nursery department superintendent* has a special field of service, since her chief work is in the home. Some of the ways in which her work can be carried on are discussed below.

a. Visit homes and talk with parents. The nursery department superintendent will not seek to give advice where it is not desired, but she is sure to have many opportunities for talking with parents about their little children in a way that should be very helpful. The following will illustrate the type of service which can be rendered by the nursery superintendent:

Mrs. Atkinson found a hearty welcome awaiting her when she reached the home of Mrs. Lawson, the mother of three-year-old John. John had just refused to do several things she had told him. "My husband says whip him, but I hate to whip such a little child. What do you think about it?" she asked Mrs. Atkinson. "I'm like you; I would hate to whip a little child, and I doubt if whipping will do any good," Mrs. Atkinson replied, glad that she could indorse Mrs. Lawson's viewpoint in part, at least. Before the visit was over, Mrs. Atkinson had told her about how Mrs. Johnson helped little Eleanor in a similar difficulty.

Three-year-old Eleanor had said: "I won't take a nap." Mrs. Johnson laughingly picked her up and threw her upon the bed. Then she had lain down beside her, pretending to go to sleep, but all the time she held little Eleanor so that she could not get off the bed. In a few minutes the child went to sleep. This she re-

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peated several days, the resistance of Eleanor growing weaker and shorter each day. On the third day Mrs. Johnson started a game by saying, "I'm going to sleep first," and little Eleanor forgot to say, "I won't."

Mrs. Atkinson also helped Mrs. Lawson by telling her how a father had treated his small son who did not come when he called. At breakfast that morning the father said: "I called you three times this morning, little son, and you didn't come, and it made me feel bad." The child made no reply, and the family conversation went on. Later, when he and the child were alone, he said again: "I called you three times this morning, little son, and you didn't answer, and it made me feel bad." "Stoop down, Daddy, I want to tell you something," said the little boy. "It made me feel bad too." In commenting upon this incident they decided that if a bond of confidence and friendship between parents and children could be made when the children are small, they would be more apt to seek the advice of their parents instead of turning away from it when they grow older.

"Is there any book that tells about a plan of that kind?" asked Mrs. Lawson. Mrs. Atkinson was ready to tell her of a book which she would lend her. Thus the work of the nursery department superintendent was being directed in channels sure to be fruitful in the life of at least one little John.

b. Share reading and other material. The nursery department superintendent is not a book agent; but if she will collect pictures, short articles, pamphlets, and names of books (if she cannot secure the books themselves), she will find herself equipped with material that can be shared with many mothers of young children.

c. Suggest better use of toys, space, and materials for young children. Many parents do not realize that many playthings suitable for young children are available with-

out cost. Spools, empty boxes, a tin cup and spoon, paper to rattle and tear suggest a variety of material of which too little use is made. The character development of little children in the home is closely tied up with their play, and the person in charge of this work will find unlimited opportunities for suggesting provisions which can be made without great cost, or for helping parents share with each other the good plans which they have made for the play life of their little children.

d. Put parents in touch with available helps. The nursery department superintendent needs to have first-hand information about the services of the county or community nurse, clinics, child study groups, and other services in connection with town or county agencies sometimes available for parents of young children.

e. Plan meetings for mothers. Sometimes mothers of small children are kept away from social affairs by the necessity of caring for their children. An occasional party where provision is made for the care of the children will be much appreciated. This may be a place where light refreshments can be served and friendly conversation can be enjoyed by the mothers, or some study feature may be added. A doctor or a nurse can give a talk on the care and feeding of babies, prevention of diseases, or the nursery department superintendent or some mother who

has given special study may give a talk on the religious nurture of the small child.

f. Send birthday cards. Parents as well as children appreciate the birthday cards which the superintendent mails to each child.

g. Transfer children to the beginner class. Just before the fourth birthday the nursery department superintendent should visit the home, accompanied, if possible, by the teacher of the beginner class. Together they may invite the child to the beginner class, and thus the home contact which has been maintained by the nursery department for several years is transferred to the beginner teacher. This need not mean, however, the cessation of the friendly interest and real friendship of the nursery department superintendent.

2. Teachers of other groups have specific though slightly different responsibilities.

a. Cards or letters on birthdays are much appreciated by children and parents. Every little child likes to get mail, and the birthday card sent so that it is received on the right date will be enjoyed more than when presented at the Sunday school several days later.

b. Telephone calls, notes, or messages as soon as possible after an absence occurs should be the practice of every teacher. Her interest and concern at this time may help to secure the co-operation of the parents in preventing

those absences which can be avoided. In cases of illness or other occasions of family joy or sorrow, the friendliness of the teacher is sure to be appreciated.

The phone call or note is also a means of calling the parent's attention to some particular plan of the class or some particular habit which the teacher is trying to help the child form.

c. Visits and personal conferences. The understanding teacher will take time to find out from his mother and father what the child likes to do, what he does well, and the things that cause difficulty. She will use this information in making her work more interesting, and frequently in a series of conferences to help the child in some particular way. An illustration of this follows:

An eleven-year-old boy was the cause of a great deal of trouble in a junior class. The teacher thought he wanted to "show-off" and gain recognition. She told his father that if he would encourage the boy to study his lesson, he might still get recognition, but in a more helpful way. The father agreed to help, but upon inquiry he found that the boy had received three quarterlies and had lost each of them. He got in touch with the teacher at once and told her he thought the boy should pay for another quarterly, since he had an allowance. This was the beginning of an understanding between father and teacher which in the end helped the boy in the problem which he faced.¹

d. Suggesting books. If possible, every teacher should have a good book on child life that can be loaned to par-

¹ Used by courtesy of Mrs. Clay E. Smith.

ents, and she should know about others. The Appendix contains a brief list of the books helpful for both parents and teachers.

OTHER WAYS OF FURTHERING UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN PARENTS AND TEACHERS

1. *Special meetings on Sundays when there is no sermon.* This will give the teachers an opportunity to interest the parents in their general plan of teaching and also to reveal to them their interest in the boys and girls whom they are trying to help. At such a meeting friendly relations can be furthered and many of the practical problems—such as prompt and regular attendance, best time for extra meetings, ways of using Sunday school material in the home, co-operation in transportation for vacation schools, and the like—can be discussed. One mother might help the children enjoy songs and stories outside the church while this meeting is held.

2. *The Workers' Council held at times when parents can attend.* Perhaps this meeting, too, will occur sometimes on Sundays when there is no sermon. If the parents are especially invited to be present and can hear the workers discussing their plans, they are much more apt to understand and enter into making better plans for the children.

3. *A few books, pamphlets, or magazines circulated among parents and teachers.* Even one dollar wisely spent

can result in much help to parents. Perhaps an extra sheet of paper could be pasted inside of a good book, upon which every person who reads it would be asked to write his name. After it had been read by a number, it might be the basis of discussion at a social meeting or some other meeting for parents and teachers.

4. *A sermon by the pastor.* A pastor could well afford to devote the time of one or more sermons to a practical discussion of the religious training of children. In such a sermon he could help both church workers and parents see the values that will come to the children when these two most intimate groups understand each other and work together.

5. *Special meeting of parents annually, quarterly, or monthly, according to the size of the community, the leadership, and the interest of the parents.* Such a special meeting might result in a regular child study group in which parents and teachers together could grow in their understanding of boys and girls.

6. *Party or special occasion for parents planned by children.* This could be undertaken by one class, but in many churches beginner, primary, and junior classes could work together in perfecting plans for such a party. Deciding upon what they would do at the party would be a helpful experience for the children, and the party itself would be for the parents a joyous occasion, since each

rejoices to see his own child happy at work and at play under the supervision of the church.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. List all the advantages to the teacher, to parents, and to children if a friendly, understanding relationship exists between the church and the home.

2. If a teacher were making his first visit to a home, what would you suggest that he say or do to convince the parents of his friendly interest in them and their children?

3. If the parents and the teachers are friends of long standing, what would you suggest that the teacher do to convince them that he is vitally concerned about the child who is in his class?

4. In what ways can the children of your church or of your class share their plans and successes with their own parents?

5. What specific things can you do to help boys and girls love their own homes and try to take their part in making them happy?

6. What opportunity has there been for the parents of children under twelve in your community to meet either socially or for purposes of mutual helpfulness and study within the year? What part did the Sunday school teachers have in such a plan?

7. What person in your community is best equipped to discuss with parents some of their home problems in child training? What could you do to secure the interest of this person in helping other parents?

8. What agencies in your county or community deal with the health or welfare of young children? What steps could be taken by the teachers of children to assist in making this help available to a large number of parents? In what sense do you think this would be a Christian service?

CHAPTER X

SPECIAL DAYS AND OCCASIONS

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

1. What special days have been observed by your Sunday school within the last twelve months? What evidence have you that these occasions meant anything to the children?

2. Why is it better to include the spirit of Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas in the plans of the school for several weeks than to concentrate upon a special program for one day?

3. In what way could presenting a picture to another class, or planning a party for parents, or having the pastor visit the class, become a *special occasion* for children? What could you do to make the preparation for, and participation in, such an occasion mean most to them?

4. What occasions in your church or community planned specially for adults are attended by children? If it is necessary for children to attend, what can be done to protect them from weariness, confusion, fear, and loneliness?

CERTAIN seasons and holidays affect the life of every community and of every person in it. Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas are of special religious significance and affect the life of the school for several weeks before the actual day arrives. Too often they are made occasions for programs and entertainments, rather than occasions which increase the abundant living of all age-groups. Churches have been known to measure a teacher's success by the kind of program she is able to "put on." It is the purpose of this chapter to consider some of the values of

such seasons, whether or not there is to be a special *program*, and also to consider the place of children on those occasions when a special program seems desirable.

IMPORTANT DAYS IN THE LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

1. *Easter*. Children cannot understand the full significance of eternal life, but their wonder and awe in connection with new life will lead them very much closer to an understanding of God, who giveth life and "giveth us richly all things to enjoy." It is a time for singing praises, for thanking God, for sharing God's good gifts, and for first-hand contact with the marvelous wonder of growing things. The story of the first Easter, when the disciples came to know that Jesus, whom they had known and loved, was still with them and that they could feel his love and his guiding presence, will help to make Easter a very happy time for children.

2. *Thanksgiving*. Every day is a thanksgiving day for children, but we are glad that Christian people recognize a definite season when all people everywhere are giving thanks. As at any other time, teachers of children will help them, according to their ages, make of it a very real time of thanksgiving. If there are persons whom they can make happy with baskets or other good things, there is no reason why they should not do so, but they should be protected from the excessive activity at this time which

too often is followed by long months of neglect of persons who need cheer and help the year round. One group of juniors took part in a church school thanksgiving service, but decided to wait until February to send a thanksgiving basket to some people at the County Home, because nobody would be thinking about them then, and their basket would be a surprise. So, although the occasion is one of real thanksgiving, all the *giving* of children need not be limited to this one season.

3. *Christmas.* Children need help in understanding the Christian meaning of Christmas. Giving because we love, sending our love with every gift, making simple things, having a part in the church plans for offerings or for gifts, hearing again the Christmas story, and singing the Christmas carols suggest ways in which Christmas can become one of the most beautiful and worshipful occasions in home and school.

Parents have so thoroughly enjoyed the Santa Claus game that they sometimes feel concerned lest the children, through contacts with other children at Sunday school or public school, shall learn that it is only a "game we play." If, however, from the time they are very young, children can have the experience of surprising others and thus in reality being Santa Claus, there will be no disillusionment when they learn that someone else has also been playing the game by being Santa Claus to them. Nothing of joy

in the occasion need be lost when a transition is made from the realm of the make-believe.

4. *Promotion Day.* Here, again, it is not the *program* but the meaning of the day which is important. The fact that once a year all the children who are old enough move up to the next class or department will help to increase their respect for their school at the church. They learn early that this happens once a year in the public school. Before Promotion Day every class will want to complete unfinished work and perhaps enjoy again the stories, pictures, and songs which they have enjoyed many times during the year. Planning some simple surprise for the other children who are coming into their class or department will also help to add meaning and joy to the occasion.

Little children especially need to be prepared for the changes on Promotion Day. Knowing the new teacher and knowing just where they are to sit will remove the feeling of strangeness which sometimes accompanies promotion and which has led little children and parents sometimes to ask that they not be promoted. The actual plans for Promotion Day itself will be considered below.

THE CHILDREN'S PART IN SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas will mean much in the life of the school, whether or not there is a special program at that time. Where separate rooms are used for

worship by departments, these occasions will be best celebrated by the children in their own rooms, and few special programs for the whole school will be held. It is sometimes desirable, however, to have a special program either at the Sunday school hour or at eleven o'clock or at some suitable hour in the afternoon for these occasions as well as for Promotion Day and other days observed in the school. In order that the children may understand and be helped if they take part in any special programs, careful plans need to be made in advance. The following items will suggest ways in which they can take part as a means of *sharing* rather than of *showing* what they have done.

1. *Group singing.* It is very much better for children to sing as a group than for individual children to appear in solo numbers in a school worship service. The songs they already know and love are usually the best ones to use. Perhaps for several weeks in advance the teachers will talk to them about the day which is coming, and together they will select the songs which they would like to share with the whole church on that day. The approach, then, is from the standpoint of sharing with others the songs we know and love, rather than "showing how well we can sing." Too often the non-Christian motive is the one to which the appeal is made.

Rehearsals of special songs are seldom needed. It

is very desirable for children to have opportunity to learn and enjoy songs throughout the year. In the one-room church their best opportunity for the enjoyment of songs will come at a time other than the Sunday school hour when they may gather around the piano. Music should be a vital part of the church provision for children the year round. When a special occasion is to occur, they can select from the songs they know and love those best suited to that occasion.

2. *Gifts and decorations.* It is sometimes possible for the juniors to assume responsibility for arranging flowers in the church for a special occasion. This can be a fine opportunity for sharing, for taking turns, and perhaps for a moment of worship at the church before the special day arrives. It is sometimes possible for younger children and for juniors, too, to make a suitable gift for everybody who will attend a special occasion. Pasting a tiny picture on a neat card, with an appropriate verse written underneath, would engage the interest and activities of children for weeks in advance. Presenting them to the people at the close of the program would give pleasure to the children and bring real joy to many an adult.

Little children took part on a special program in a small church by marching down the church aisle, each with a flower to be placed in an empty bowl on a table arranged for the purpose. An adult stood near the table and helped

each little child put his flower in place, after which they were seated on a bench at the front. During the service which followed, much was said which they did not understand, but they could at least enjoy the bowl of lovely flowers which they had brought to help the people think about God.

3. *Reading Scripture.* Sometimes a passage which the juniors have learned is appropriate for the program on a special occasion. They can either stand together and repeat it or can lead the congregation in reading it.

Whether it be singing or whether it be reading, it is usually desirable for the children to stand wherever they are in the church and to face the leader while their part is given, rather than to march up to the front and face the congregation. In the first arrangement they are more apt to feel that they are having a part in a real worship service. In the second arrangement they are more apt to feel that they are entertaining adults. Encores and applause are entirely out of place in a church worship service.

CHILDREN'S PART SUITED TO THEIR AGES

Those planning for special programs will remember that children are children, and they will not attempt to have all the program on an adult level. They will plan things for the children to do which are in harmony with their ability and development.

CHILDREN'S WORK IN THE CHURCH

Children of the nursery department need have no part in any special occasion. If they attend, they should be in the care of their mothers and have no part in the program. Beginner children may sing some of their favorite songs, bring flowers or gifts for Christmas, for Easter, for Thanksgiving, or Mothers' Day. Primary children may sing, share some of their favorite pictures, posters, or books, bring flowers, and join in certain of the scripture responses which they know. Junior boys and girls may decorate the church, join in the congregational singing and responsive reading, and sometimes share with adults some of their own stories, songs, and memory work.

MAKING OTHER OCCASIONS "SPECIAL"

Presenting a picture, having a party for parents, visiting another class, entertaining a visitor in one's own class are special occasions to children. The thoughtful teacher will make much of such occasions.

WHEN CHILDREN ATTEND ADULT MEETINGS

There will be in the life of every church special meetings planned for adults alone. Sunday school institutes, training schools, and other such meetings are frequently attended by children. It is sometimes necessary for them to be brought in order that their parents may attend. Understanding adults, however, will go as far as possible in

SPECIAL DAYS AND OCCASIONS

urging parents not to bring their children unless it is necessary, and will see to it that if the children must be brought they are protected, in so far as is possible, from bodily weariness and from undesirable attitudes which develop when they are neglected or ignored.

Church-wide social occasions, such as picnics and evening suppers of various kinds, are times when children often are forgotten or neglected. The Sunday school picnic can be a time for teachers and children to have a fine day of games and fellowship such as they have wished for. Definite plans should be made for them in order that the occasion may be a profitable and not a taxing one. The adult missionary society meeting may also offer an opportunity for a teacher and children to carry out some of the plans for which they have needed more time. This is possible if there can be a separate place for the children while the adults are meeting.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What is your own impression of the special days and occasions of the church which you attended as a child?
2. What can you do to protect the children of your church from the undesirable experiences which you had? What can you do to increase and make more effective the helpful and desirable experiences which you had?
3. What values may result if some occasion, such as presenting a picture to another class, is so carefully planned that the children remember it for a long time?

CHILDREN'S WORK IN THE CHURCH

4. Make a list of practical suggestions concerning ways in which the attendance of children upon meetings planned for adults may become meaningful for the children also.

5. Outline a school program for Easter, for Thanksgiving, for Christmas, which will be helpful for children as well as for adults.

6. Make a list of the best songs for children to use on such occasions. How many of these songs do your children know?

CHAPTER XI

GROWTH

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

1. In what respects do Sunday schools grow?
2. In what respects do persons grow?
3. What conditions sometimes prevent the well-rounded physical development of children?
4. What conditions sometimes prevent the normal Christian development of children?
5. What particular items in the space, equipment, arrangement, organization, or plan of work for children in your church could be made better by the combined efforts of all the workers?
6. What phase of your method of working with children as a parent or teacher could be most easily improved?
7. What value is there in selecting one or two items and working definitely toward improving them, rather than forming many good resolutions of a general nature?

GROWTH is a law of life; change is to be expected, and the wise leader welcomes rather than resents it. The most inspiring thought about life is that it can and does change; that parents can become better parents; that teachers can become better teachers; that churches can become more effective agencies for advancing the Kingdom of God; that children can grow more thoughtful, more unselfish, more reverent, more loving, more devoted to Jesus, more conscious of God in his world and in their own lives; that

people can help bring about changes in the lives of other people.

Too often increase in membership or in amount of money raised is the only measure of progress in the life of a church; increase in number of meetings attended and books read is too often the only measure of growth in the life of a teacher; increase in stature or in years or in strength is often the only measure of the growth of a child. It is the purpose of this chapter to help the reader think of growth as more than increase of those things that can be observed by the natural eye and to help him select for himself and for his school one or two reasonable items for improvement.

A SCHOOL GROWS

An effort to bring others into its membership is a worth-while and legitimate objective of every good school. No church, however, will be satisfied merely to announce an increase of so many members within the month or within the year. The effort to increase membership should be accompanied by just as definite an effort to increase its helpfulness to all who attend.

The school can also advance in its standing in the community. A well-organized, active church promoting plans which affect the lives of its members cannot fail to affect the life of the whole community; and as the community's

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respect for such a church increases, the church's ability to raise the level of the whole community increases.

MEASURING THE TEACHER'S GROWTH

Prompt and regular attendance upon every session of the school and allied meetings, workers' meetings, training schools, institutes, or conferences is expected of every good Sunday school teacher; but unless these are accompanied by clearer vision, stronger purposes, and more effective ways of work, no growth has taken place. We are convinced that teachers can grow in understanding children; in ability to make plans in harmony with the needs of children; in better use of time, space, and equipment; in team work; in willingness to try suggested ideas open-mindedly; in interest and enthusiasm for the local church as a field of Christian service; in ability to co-operate with parents in understanding and guiding their children; in deeper devotion to the cause for which the church stands.

"THIS ONE THING I Do"

Not all the ideas suggested in this brief text will fit every church. Many will have served their purpose if they cause the reader to think of better plans for his own situation than those which are suggested. The following questions are given to guide individuals or groups in selecting one or two points as a basis of special effort for

CHILDREN'S WORK IN THE CHURCH

improving their provisions for children. Even the smallest church will find lines along which it can work, and the best-equipped church will be challenged to work along some of the same lines, although the number of members and the actual size of the building in the two places will be very different. The suggestion is that each reader or group of readers select one thing and *do it* as a result of this study.

1. Can the children be grouped to better advantage?

a. Are there nursery, beginner, primary, and junior groups in your school, and is each group (or class) called by its proper name?

b. Do the children younger than four who attend Sunday school remain with their mothers if no separate space is provided for them?

c. Is any class too large for good work? If so, can another teacher be secured and the class be divided?

d. Is any class too small for good work? If so, has every effort been made to discover other children who ought to be in this class?

2. Are the children properly promoted annually?

a. Are children transferred from the nursery department to the beginner class when they reach the age of four?

b. Is the school so managed that no transferring of children from class to class occurs except on Promotion Day?

3. Does each teacher have in writing the name, the birthday, and the school grade of each child?

a. Are records of attendance accurately and neatly kept?

b. Is there provision for placing new children in the proper class?

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4. Are there children within reach of your church who should be enrolled as home members of the appropriate class? If there are home members, is the fellowship of the school extended to them in appropriate ways?

5. Is each class supplied with the lesson material intended for that class?

- a. Is the literature ordered in sufficient quantity?
- b. Is it ordered far enough in advance to prevent delay?
- c. Is the teacher provided with the book intended for her?
- d. Are pictures provided for the beginner and primary classes?

6. Is the space used by children adequate and comfortable?

- a. Are the seats of the proper height?
- b. Is the floor space sufficient to prevent crowding?
- c. Are tables provided for those groups having sufficient space?
- d. Is some place provided for putting away materials between Sundays?
- e. Is there a place for children's hats and wraps?
- f. Is there adequate provision for drinking water?
- g. Are toilet facilities available?

7. Is the space conveniently and attractively arranged?

a. If screens are used, are they of suitable size? Are they light in weight?

b. Does each class have access to material it needs without disturbing another class?

c. Is there some place where pictures used by beginner and primary groups can be placed each Sunday? Are these pictures of appropriate size and subject? Are they suitably placed? Are they durable enough for the children to handle and enjoy them?

CHILDREN'S WORK IN THE CHURCH

d. Are containers available for flowers? Are they kept clean? Are they put away when not in use?

e. Do the children have a sense of pride and responsibility for the appearance of the space which they use?

8. Does the school have a definite hour for opening?
Does it open on time?

a. Is sufficient time allowed for class work? Is this time free from interruption?

b. Is the teacher supplied *in advance* with the material to be given the children?

c. Are the reports of the teacher to the school secretary made accurately and promptly within the minimum amount of time?

d. Do general officers refrain from interrupting the children's classes?

e. Do they sometimes visit a class for the entire session?

f. Does the session close on time?

g. Are occasional or regular meetings of the children's classes held in addition to the Sunday session?

h. Does the church have a vacation school?

9. Are the teachers elected annually?

a. Are they prompt and regular in attendance upon sessions of the school? Upon meetings of the workers' council? Upon training schools? Other meetings intended for workers?

b. Do the teachers sometimes confer concerning their work with children?

c. Do classes sometimes make week-day plans together?

d. Do the teachers make every effort to know the children outside of the Sunday session?

e. Do they sometimes visit the homes of their pupils? Do they sometimes visit public schools or other Sunday schools for the purpose of discovering better ways of working with children?

10. Do the teachers make thorough preparation for each meeting of their classes?

a. Are they supplied with the lesson material intended for both teacher and pupil?

b. Do they plan for each session with the children rather than the lesson material primarily in mind?

c. Do they discover and use other valuable material, such as flowers, leaves, rocks, shells, moss, coal, seed; objects which will widen the horizon of children and acquaint them with other members of God's family, such as pictures, food from other lands, games from other lands, things other people send to us, and the like?

d. Do they use the time before the opening of the school or after its close to further friendliness between themselves and the children, parents, and other members of the family?

11. Do the teachers make good use of all time and material?

a. Does a happy, friendly feeling exist within each group?

b. Do the children have a part in arranging flowers, material, and equipment?

c. Is a minimum of time devoted to routine matters, such as records and reports?

d. Is the offering an act of worship?

e. Do the children enter whole-heartedly into the plans of the session?

f. Are stories used to guide and enrich lives, rather than to be learned and reviewed?

g. Are verses and songs used in such a way that the children understand and enjoy them?

h. Is the spirit of such occasions as Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas reflected in the plans of the class for several weeks?

i. Do the children have opportunity to do things for each other? For some other class? For the church? For the pastor? For

CHILDREN'S WORK IN THE CHURCH

their homes? For other people? Are these plans made and carried out by the children?

j. Do the parents understand that the lesson folder received by beginner and primary children are to be enjoyed again in the home, but not necessarily studied?

k. Do the parents of juniors understand that the lesson book which the children receive is to be used for three months?

l. Do the parents understand that a Bible is needed by every junior?

12. Is provision made for training children in worship?

a. If the school worships all together, is the service planned so that the children can understand and have some part in it?

b. Do the children sit together by classes during the school worship service?

c. If a separate room is available, do the children's groups have their own worship service every Sunday?

d. Are the teachers supplied with suitable songs for their age-groups? Do the juniors know and enjoy some of the best songs available for them? Does the whole school frequently sing these songs which the juniors know and love?

e. Are suitable pictures, nature objects, service activities, and other experiences used as a basis of worship?

f. Are the children being helped to think of God as very near; as glad when his children talk to him; as depending upon them to do his work in the world?

g. Is every plan of the class related to God in such a way that children understand they are doing his work?

h. Are suitable Bible verses and passages used to increase the children's consciousness of God?

i. Is every effort made to help them worship through their offering? Are they helped to understand that other gifts as well as money are pleasing to God?

13. Are the needs of children considered on special occasions?

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a. Is their participation on special days in the nature of *sharing* with others rather than *showing off*?

b. Is the preparation for a special day considered a legitimate use of class time?

c. Is the preparation for a special day protected from undue haste and excitement and last-minute decisions?

d. Is the age of the various groups considered in determining their part in a special day service? For instance, do the juniors sometimes assume responsibility for decorations, for announcements, for posters, and for participation in singing and reading? Do beginner and primary children sometimes share in making the room beautiful; in making a simple souvenir for each person who will attend; and share with the others flowers, pictures, or songs which they have enjoyed?

e. Are the children younger than four protected entirely from any participation in special programs?

14. Do the parents of the children consider the Sunday school teacher and the plans of the church as of real value to their children?

a. Does a friendly acquaintance exist between parents and teachers?

b. Have the teachers made every effort to acquaint parents with their purposes and plans?

c. Have the teachers visited the homes of their pupils with some degree of regularity?

d. Has some opportunity been provided for the parents and teachers to meet for the purpose of study and mutual helpfulness in understanding children?

e. Do the teachers own books, pamphlets, and magazines which are shared with the parents?

f. Does the nursery department superintendent make every effort to magnify Christian home-making?

g. Are the teachers informed about the county or community agencies which would be helpful to parents? Have they made

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every effort to co-operate with these agencies and to acquaint parents with their availability and purpose?

h. Are the birthdays of children remembered with a card, note, or visit?

15. Are the children growing in Christian living?

HELPING CHILDREN GROW

All reading of books, study of lesson material, and attendance upon meetings are of no avail unless they help teachers and parents become increasingly conscious that they are workers with God in the task of helping children develop all inherent powers in harmony with the highest and best of which they are capable.

One teacher who lightly said this was her purpose talked with children about God's sternness, his displeasure when a child made a mistake, his power to destroy a forest with lightning, thunder, or with the scorching power of the sun.

Another teacher sought to lead a child to the Father. She went rapidly from fact to fact and hastily tried to cram his mind, leaving no time for him to be still and know that God is God. She poured into his ears all of the stories she thought he ought to know, and was surprised when the child was not interested.

Still another teacher sought in every way to know the child; she helped him discover the Father's care as the little bird built her nest; she helped him see God's creative power in the petals of the flower as they enjoyed the bright

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colors ; she helped him share God's purpose by doing things which would add comfort and joy and happiness to the lives of other people. From such experiences she had a right to expect that in loving, trusting eagerness such a child would look into his Father's face and sometimes forget all else but him.

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS

Books

Betty Ann, Beginner. Dunlap.

Child Care and Training. Faegre and Anderson.

How Shall I Learn to Teach Religion? Carrier.

Missionary Education of Beginners. Moore.

The Worship of a Little Child. Baker.

An Introduction to Child Study. Strang.

Character Guidance and Occupation for Children. McCallum.

Teaching Primaries in the Church School. Smither.

Worship and Conduct Songs for Beginners and Primaries.
Shields.

Children's Prayers. Recorded by their mother.

PAMPHLETS

United States Department of Labor, Children's Bureau, Washington, D. C.:

Are You Training Your Child to Be Happy?

The Child from One to Six.

Child Management.

Prenatal Care.

Child Study Association of America, 221 West Fifty-seventh Street, New York City:

Obedience.

CHILDREN'S WORK IN THE CHURCH

Curiosity.

Use of Money.

Rewards and Punishments.

Health Training of the Pre-school Child.

Play and Playthings.

National Committee for Mental Hygiene, 370 Seventh Avenue,
New York City:

Are We Helping or Hindering Our Children?

Old and New Versions of Child Training.

Habit Training for Children.

American Social Hygiene Association, 370 Seventh Avenue,
New York City:

Some Information for Mother.

Best Toys Educational Service, 2230 Van Hise Avenue, Madison,
Wis.:

Best Toys for Children and Their Selection.

Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, Tenn., Dallas, Tex.,
Richmond, Va., or San Francisco, Calif.:

The Gift of Peace. Milton.

The Little Child and God. Milton.

The Nursery Group on Sunday Morning.

Denominational pamphlets for use by departments.

CHILDREN'S WORK IN THE CHURCH

By MARY E. SKINNER

This study presents ways in which the small church can make more adequate provision for Nursery, Beginner, Primary, and Junior children.

Workers in every church not fully organized on a departmental basis will be helped particularly by this book. It directs the reader to a study of his own situation. It gives guidance for determining the organization and provisions needed for one's own church and church school.

. . . . The Contents

- I. THE CHILDREN WE TEACH.**
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